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DAN

A CITIZEN
of a JUNIOR
REPUBLIC

I. T. THURSTON

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William Cameron Forbes

H. Cameron Forbes



THE HISTORY OF

THE "A FACHOR MAIDE," A V. V.
DON MALCOLM, E. C.

BOSTON

Pelham Place

NEW YORK & CHICAGO



CITIZEN DAN

OF THE JUNIOR REPUBLIC

BY

IDA T. THURSTON

AUTHOR OF "BOYS OF THE CENTRAL," "A BACHELOR MAIDE," "A VILLAGE
CONTEST," "DON MALCOLM," ETC.

BOSTON

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CITIZEN DAN

OF THE JUNIOR REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.

DAN.

A GONG sounded and the boy on his bicycle slowed up suddenly and watched the doors of the engine house on the next block. In a moment they flew open, and three splendid gray horses went plunging down the street with the gleaming fire engine, which left a wake of glowing coals behind it. Philip Boyd bent over his handle bar and followed swiftly, regardless of speed limits. Long before he reached the block where the fire was, he could see dense smoke rising above a tall tenement house, and a gathering crowd in the street below. Already two engines were pouring water on the flames; firemen were putting up a water tower and others running up the ladders. The space in front of the burning building was roped off, but even now a rapidly increasing throng packed the street on either side of this space. Within the ropes were the women and children and two or three old men who

had escaped from the house, and the firemen were bringing out others, and throwing bedding and furniture from the windows of the lower stories, for the fire was in the upper part of the building.

Leaving his wheel in a corner drug store, Phil edged his way slowly through the dense crowd until he stood close against the rope. The hurrying firemen pushed and hustled him, the water from the great hose pipes drenched him, the thick cindery air made his eyes smart and his throat tingle; but there he staid oblivious of everything but the sights and sounds around him. The chug-chug of the engines, the roar and crackle of the flames streaming like huge fiery banners towards the sky, the strange, hoarse cry that rose at intervals from the throng, mingled with the sharp orders of the fire chief, the answering shouts of the men, and the wailing cries and laments of the women and children crouching among the smoky remnants of their household goods under the showers of water and cinders, — all these made a strange tumult that stirred the boy's heart with an intense excitement and an eager desire to have a hand in the rescue work — to do something — anything — to help. But those brave fellows in helmets and rubber coats were doing all that could be done. They could not save the building, but they could keep the fire from spreading to the neighboring houses.

The men came hurrying down the ladders; the chief called, "All out?"

And the men answered, "All out."

But instantly a shrill, bitter cry rose above the din and tumult. "No, no!" You hain't got my Johnny. My little Johnny's in there yet!"

It was a woman's cry — a woman who stood within the rope. She held a white-faced baby clasped tightly to her bosom, but she seemed to give it no thought as she sent out her agonizing cry for the one that was missing.

"There's no living creature left in that furnace now," the chief answered her with rough sympathy, "and if there was, no man could go back there — 't would be certain death."

The woman gazing past him, gave a strange, wild, triumphant shriek.

"Look, Look!" she cried. "There's Dan — there's Dan and he's got my boy. O you won't let them die there — you can't! You can't!" she sobbed wildly, pointing to a window where, against a background of smoke and flame, a boy had suddenly appeared with something in his arms.

Instantly half a dozen firemen sprang to one of the ladders, and before it was fairly in place, one of them began to mount rapidly.

"Quick! Quick!" the chief shouted.

Indeed there was need of haste, for already there were ominous cracks in the wall. The boy had climbed up on the windowsill and was clinging to the side with one hand, and with the other holding fast his living bundle. Down below, they were hurrying

to spread the life net to catch him should he fall or jump. The crowd gazed upward in a hush of breathless interest and suspense. The mother, clutching her baby, uttered strange little moaning sighs as she watched. The boy outside the rope saw nothing but the brave young figure on that dizzy height, with the flames clutching at him with fiery fingers.

A quiver passed over the front of the building. The man on the ladder saw it and paused.

"Cheer him! Cheer him!" yelled the chief, and as if from a single voice there went up a long, resounding cheer, thrilling with warm human sympathy. At the sound of it, the man on the ladder leaped quickly up the remaining steps and held out his arms. The boy dropped the child into the outstretched hands and then struggled for a foothold on the ladder, but the strain had been too great; his blistered hands lost their hold, and he fell, but fell into the life net that the strong hands below were holding.

Again, as with a single impulse, a mighty cheer went up from the watching multitude below, and men shouted and women sobbed as the happy mother pressed her two babies to her heart and counted herself rich, though she had not so much as a bed left on which to lay them; and the boy outside the rope watched eagerly for a glimpse of that other boy who had risked his life for a little child — and counted him a hero.

CHAPTER II.

TWO CITIZENS-ELECT.

FOR many days Phil Boyd's thoughts lingered about that boy with a curious persistency. More than once he rode through the street where the fire had been, but he never caught a glimpse of "Dan." He wondered often what Dan's other name was. Phil had plenty of time to wonder listlessly about many things in these spring days while he waited in a half-indifferent, half-reckless mood for the day that was sure to come, that day when his father should receive a letter from Professor Hollister. In his pocket Phil had two letters directed to his father. The next one might come when he, Phil, was not on hand to receive it.

It did. Phil, whistling carelessly as he passed through the hall one afternoon, heard his name spoken in a tone so unusual that his whistle ceased abruptly, and it was with a white face, and with an anxious expression in his eyes, that he entered the library where his father sat with an open letter in his hand. The boy did not glance around the room, yet he was conscious that his sister Grace was in her usual reading place among the cushions in the wide

window seat. He wished she had not been there. His father's face was very grave and stern as he said:

"Philip, read that letter."

The boy dropped into the nearest chair and glanced at the sheet—he did not need to read it. His lips twitched nervously as he laid it silently on the table.

"Well, sir, what have you to say?" his father demanded. "Where have you spent the time these weeks when I supposed you were at school?"

Phil pulled himself together and made an attempt to treat the matter lightly.

"Oh, round about town!" he said, but his face belied his careless manner.

"Philip!" His father had never before spoken to him in just that tone. "It will be best for you to answer me in a different fashion from that."

The boy's eyes grew more anxious. He stammered out hastily, "I—I've been at the club and on the golf links, and—and just riding round town on my wheel. I—truly, father, I have n't done anything very bad. I just got so sick of school that I could n't stand it." He forced a laugh as he added, "Say, father, did n't you ever play hookey when you were a boy?"

"I never lied and deceived my father," Mr. Boyd answered sternly.

Phil flushed with quick indignation.

"I have n't lied!" he flung out angrily.

"What do you call it? An acted lie is no less a

lie than a spoken one. Why have I not received the other letters that Professor Hollister has sent me?"

For answer, Phil drew from his pocket two unopened envelopes and laid them on the table.

For a little there was silence in the room—a silence that lasted until it seemed intolerable to the boy. A long, smothered sigh from the window seat made him stir restlessly; then his father spoke in a weary, disheartened tone.

"Philip, you will not study; you will not work. What *shall* I do with you?"

The boy broke out impatiently:

"I tell you, father, I'm dead sick of school! What's the use of a fellow digging away at his books for years when he hates 'em? And as to work—what need is there of my working with all the money you have?" He choked a little over the last words, and colored furiously at the scornful light in his father's eyes.

Mr. Boyd rose and walked once or twice across the room; then he stopped before his son and said, slowly and gravely, "Philip, you may go to your room and pack your trunk. I am going to send you to Hadley."

A look of glad relief swept over the boy's handsome face. "To the Junior Republic?" he exclaimed. "Oh, that's jolly! I'm sure I'll like it, father—they must have loads of fun there."

His relief was so great that he forgot all about Grace back there on the window seat. He was so

glad to get out of the room, away from his father's eyes—so glad to have this disagreeable talk over and its result so much better than he had feared. He ran through the hall and up the stairs, two steps at a time, whistling as blithely as if there were no such things as sorrow and disappointment in the world.

His father, looking after him, sighed wearily. It was so like Phil to fling it all aside carelessly and think only of the "loads of fun" to follow. He covered his face with his hand; Grace came and laid her cheek softly against his, in token of loving sympathy, and then went silently away to her room.

In the two days before he set out for Hadley, Phil was full of happy anticipations; he laughed at Grace because she grieved over his going. Perhaps some of his gaiety was due to his relief after the long anticipation of the past weeks; perhaps some of it was simply Phil's way of hiding his deeper feelings; but Grace did not know that, and she thought he did not care at all.

She stood in the doorway, trying hard to be bright and cheerful, the morning that Phil and his father went away. As the boy stepped into the carriage that was to take them to the train, he glanced back, and was touched with late remorse.

"Hold on a minute, father!" he cried, and, turning, he ran back up the steps.

"See here, Gracie, don't you fret," he exclaimed earnestly. "I'm going to try to do the right thing now,—I am, really. And I'll answer every single

letter you write me, so it will be your own fault if you don't hear from me often." He gave her a kiss, — in his haste it fell on her ear instead of her cheek; then rushed down the steps, waved his hand to her from the carriage window, and was gone, leaving his sister a little comforted by those last earnest words.

As for Phil, when he tired of looking out of the car window, as he did very soon, he gave himself up to pleasing visions of the new life to which he was going. If he had any ambition for the future it was to have a share in the political life of the nation — to be, of course, a political leader. A college education was entirely superfluous in such a life plan — so Phil thought — and at Hadley he believed that he would have a chance to work out his vague ideas on a small scale. He would make himself very popular among the boys; he would become a leader and hold high office — judge of the supreme court perhaps, at first, and then president — why not? As to working — Phil laughed to himself. He'd get out of that one way or another.

There was but one other boy in the car. He sat alone a few seats in front, on the other side of the aisle from Phil and his father — a boy with a plain face that would have been absolutely homely but for the clear, straightforward gray eyes. He looked about Phil's age — sixteen perhaps, or seventeen — and he was plainly, almost shabbily, dressed — but Phil thought him the happiest looking boy that he had ever seen.

In the next seat in front was a woman with two little children. The baby was evidently sick, for it lay, white-faced and almost motionless, in its mother's arms, only making now and then a feeble little moaning sound. The older child was scarcely more than a baby, and growing tired and fretful with the journey, he at last broke into an impatient cry, and tried to clamber into the mother's lap, pushing the baby aside.

At the sound of that fretful wailing Phil scowled.

"It's a shame they don't have parlor cars on this train!" he was thinking, when he saw the big boy in front reach over the back of the seat and lift the little fellow into the vacant place beside him.

"Guess I can keep him still awhile," he said cheerfully to the tired, anxious mother, "kids never cry with me."

"Huh!" commented Phil, watching the two, "reckon he'll get sick of that job pretty quick."

He expected to hear the fretful wail begin again, but it didn't, and presently a gleeful laugh ran through the car. Phil began to wonder what that boy was doing; the back of the seat hid the little fellow from his view. After a while his curiosity made him go forward to the water tank so that he could see as he walked back what those two were about. He saw that the big boy had rolled his handkerchief into a rabbit—a rabbit that was cutting up the most astonishing capers with an accompaniment of funny little squeaks and cries, all for the

amusement of the little chap in the corner of the seat. Phil was not the only one who was watching the pair now, and more than one of the passengers smiled sympathetically as the merry, baby laugh bubbled out again and again. Phil caught himself smiling too, as he walked slowly up the aisle, looking and listening. By and by the tired child began to nod; the lids drooped slowly over the blue eyes, and soon he was sleeping quietly. Then the boy stretched him out comfortably on the seat and crossed over himself to an empty one further back, opposite where Phil was sitting. He nodded and smiled across the aisle as he sat down, and Phil felt unaccountably drawn towards him. In a few minutes he stepped across and the other boy moved along to make room for him.

"You're a first-class nurse, aren't you?" Phil laughed. "You got that youngster quiet in a hurry."

The other boy smiled. "I like kids," he said simply.

"Huh! I don't then!" Phil's lip curled scornfully as he spoke. "Going far?"

"To Hadley."

Phil's face kindled with sudden interest at that.

"Junior Republic?" he questioned eagerly.

The other nodded.

"So am I," said Phil.

The other boy stared in quick surprise.

"You?" he said.

"Yes; why not?"

"Oh — I do' know; only I guess the' ain't many o' your sort at Hadley."

"My sort?" Phil repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Why," — hesitatingly, — "you're a swell, ain't you? It's mostly fellows of my sort, — poor chaps, you know, — that go to Hadley."

"That so?" returned Phil, and he thought, "All the better; I'll be sure to lead such a crowd as that."

"What's your name?" he asked abruptly.

"Dan Dennis."

A deeper interest grew in Phil's eyes then. He leaned forward, eagerly studying the boy's face.

"Where did you live in the city?" he inquired breathlessly.

Dan gave the street and number. Phil looked disappointed.

"Oh!" he said. Then he added: "Did you ever know a fellow about your size, and named Dan, that lived — I guess he lived — on the next street, in or near a house that got burned, not long ago?"

"Knew him as well as I know myself," answered Dan, with a quiet laugh.

"Say, are you that fellow?" Phil questioned, with keenest interest.

Dan nodded, watching Phil's excited face with a look of queer surprise.

"Then it was *you* that brought that other little chap out of the fire that time?" Phil hurried on.

Dan gave a careless nod. "Yes; that was nothin'.

I did n't get hurt much, — only just scorched my hair and burnt my hands a little," — he said.

He slipped his hands out of sight as he spoke, but not before Phil had caught a glimpse of some ugly scars. He reached out his own hand impulsively.

"I say, that was splendid! I was at that fire, and I saw you," he said, heartily.

Dan's face flushed, and he twisted uneasily in his seat. "'Twar n't nothin'," he mumbled, "anybody'd a-done that much. I liked that little Johnny O'Brien, ye see — I lived in the next room to his folks."

There was no more weariness for Phil on that journey, nor for Dan, either. The latter knew some city boys that had been at Hadley, and knew much more than Phil did about the life there. Phil talked largely about what he meant to do at Hadley, and Dan listened to it all, with a queer look in his gray eyes, but he did n't say much about that.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST GLIMPSES OF HADLEY.

WHEN the train stopped at Hadley, Phil and Dan hurried out of the car and looked eagerly about them. They saw just an ordinary country station with no sign of the republic except a two-seated wagon with the words "Hadley Junior Republic" in red letters on one side. A boy with merry blue eyes and light curly hair stood beside it, and stared curiously at Phil and Dan as they walked up to him.

"Are you waiting for us?" Phil inquired.

"Waitin' for two fellows from New York. You the ones?" he returned promptly.

"We're the ones," responded Phil. "Wait a minute for my father, — he's looking after my baggage."

It did not take the three boys long to get acquainted. Phil sat on the back seat with his father, but he kept up such a steady stream of questions that the curly-headed boy had to drive most of the way with his face over his shoulder. He told Phil that his name was Will Anderson. He was very friendly, but there was a curious expression in his eyes as they wandered from Phil's straw hat, with



its fresh blue ribbon, over the handsome gray suit, down to the low shoes, showing glimpses of blue silk stockings with white polka dots. Dan, quietly looking on, and listening most of the time, understood that look in Will's eyes; Phil remembered it later.

Once, when Phil's questions ceased for a little, while he was saying something to his father, Will leaned over and whispered to Dan.

"Say — is he a duke or a dude?"

"Little of both, mebbe, but he's all right, I guess," was Dan's low reply.

"But he ain't goin' to stay with *us*, is he?" Will questioned, curiously.

Before Dan could answer, they turned into the republic grounds, and Phil began to fire a fresh batch of questions at the driver.

"What's that long brown building with the big piazza?" he inquired.

"That's the hotel, the 'Grand,'" Will answered.

"All the citizens board there?"

"No, only the rich fellers. Board costs three to five dollars a week there 'cording to the room you have. Lots of the citizens can't afford that, so some board over at the Caboose — that little brown building off yonder. And the girls have their own house."

"And where's the court-house and the jail?"

"In that brown building on the other side of the green. The court-room is on the first floor and the cells in the basement. The girls' jail is that other white building just opposite."

"And what are the other houses?"

"The little one with awnings over the windows is the printing office where our paper, *The New Republic*, is printed once a month; and we do some job printing too there now. The low shanty way over, most out of sight, is the almshouse, and that white house up on the hill is the new hospital. It's awful nice up there, and cool, I tell ye! Then there's the yellow cottage close to the drive, where Brother lives, and the stone building is the chapel. Awful pretty, ain't it! A lady built that for us when her boy died, and another lady gave us our library. We call it Memorial Library."

The eager interest with which Phil listened pleased the young driver. He was ready to answer endless questions about the republic.

"It is Mr. Carter, the superintendent, that you call Brother, I suppose"? Mr. Boyd said questioningly.

The boy looked around at him with shining eyes

"Yes," he said; "we all call him Brother—he wants us to."

"I guess you like him, don't you?" queried Phil.

A wave of deep feeling swept over the boyish face. "Like him? *Like* Brother? Well, I just *guess!*" was the emphatic response. "Why, there ain't a citizen in this republic that would n't crawl on his hands and knees to do anything for Brother—except, well"—he broke into a frank little laugh, "you know there's always a good for nothing chump or two in every crowd. We don't count them."

They were going up the driveway now, under the shawdow of the tall elms on either side.

"It is a beautiful place. What noble trees,—and what fine fresh grass you have everywhere," Mr. Boyd said.

Will Anderson threw back his head with a smile of proud satisfaction.

"Can't find a prettier place anywhere than the H. J. R.," he exclaimed, "nor a nicer place to live in. *You'll* like it a lot." This last to Dan, who in his quiet fashion was taking note of everything. "Here we are, and here comes Brother," the boy added, as he drew up at the steps leading to the yellow cottage.

Phil's eyes searched curiously the face of this man who had won such devotion from so many boys. He saw a tall broad-shouldered man with a face strong and kindly; pleasant eyes that had a way of seeing everything, and a mass of iron-gray hair pushed back from a broad forehead.

Mr. Carter greeted Mr. Boyd, then turned with a warm smile to the boys, grasping a hand of each.

"My two new citizens," he said heartily, "you are more than welcome, both of you."

His eyes lingered for an instant on Phil's handsome, eager face, then passed on to Dan's homely, honest countenance. There was an added warmth in the smile he gave to Dan.

He turned to lead the way to his office, but Phil was fidgetting to get away, anxious to "prowl around

and see it all," as he had whispered aside to Dan, and he hung back a little.

"What's that for?" he cried, as a bugler in a neat gray uniform appeared on the green and sounded a musical summons.

"That's for supper," Brother answered, "and you travellers must be quite ready for it; but you are my guests for to-night. This way, please," and he led them into the house. Phil would much have preferred to go over to the hotel and have supper "with the crowd," but he was hungry enough to be glad to sit down at any table.

It was an abundant meal, well cooked and well served. Brother's wife was a little dot of a woman with the gentle, kindly manner of one who had "mothered" scores of girls and boys, though of her very own she had none.

As soon as the meal was over Phil snatched up his hat.

"We can go out and see the boys now, can't we — Dan and I?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; you may see all you can between now and nine o'clock, when curfew will ring," Brother answered, with a smile of comprehension.

While the boys were gone he had a long talk with Mr. Boyd, who told him frankly why he had brought Phil there, and how much he hoped for the boy from this new experience.

Brother listened with grave interest. "Yes," he said, thoughtfully; "it may be the best thing you

could do with him, provided you can harden your heart to his pleadings."

"What do you mean? Phil is perfectly delighted to be here," Mr. Boyd replied.

"Oh, yes! just at first undoubtedly he will enjoy it; but as soon as the novelty wears off and he finds that the work here *is* work and not play, do you think he will be contented? I don't."

"I suppose you are right." There was a note of discouragement in Mr. Boyd's voice. "And what in the world shall I do with him then?"

"Why, simply make him understand that he must stay here anyhow, whether he likes it or not," Brother returned promptly.

"But if he gets too homesick, or really sick—he may do that?" the father questioned.

"Come over and see our hospital," Brother responded, rising. "You want to look around, of course."

The hospital, set on the hillside, where the strong, cool mountain breezes swept it from end to end, was attractive enough to make a boy "almost willing to be sick for a day or two," as Mr. Boyd remarked. Everything about it was immaculately fresh and clean. There was but one patient,—a boy with a broken leg,—and he had a nurse all to himself—a nurse in a blue and white striped dress and the freshest of white aprons.

"If your boy should be sick," said Brother, "he would have here as good attention as you could give

him at home. There are three doctors in the village, and two of them give their services freely here whenever we need them. That is n't often," he added with a laugh. "In the four years since I began my work here we've never had a case of serious illness. We did have an epidemic of measles last year, but the patients all got through in fine shape. And as to your son, Mr. Boyd, if you hope for any lasting benefit from his stay with us, it must be a long stay; certainly not less than a year. It is character building that we aim to do here, and that takes time, you know."

"Yes, I understand that."

Brother went on: "If Phil stays with us, I admit frankly that I expect he will have a pretty hard time for a while. From what you have told me, he does not like work of any kind. Here he will have to work. The living — the food — will be healthy and abundant, but much plainer than he has probably been accustomed to. He may even have to wash his own clothes, Mr. Boyd."

"Oh, he could n't do such work as that!" exclaimed Mr. Boyd in a tone of dismay. "That's too much to expect."

Brother smiled serenely. "There is no need of his doing that, you understand, if he will work, but if he absolutely refuses —"

He paused, leaving his sentence unfinished.

Mr. Boyd nodded thoughtfully, but his face was very grave. Had he set his boy too hard a task, he was asking himself.

They were crossing the green now, and everywhere Brother met affectionate greetings. The boys lifted their caps to him; the girls stopped him to ask a question, or tell of something done; anything to win a special word and smile. One little girl slipped her fingers shyly into his and trotted silently across the green at his side, her round face beaming with satisfaction.

"This is the school-house," Brother said, throwing open the door. "We have two teachers, and we fit the citizens for the high school in the village, though, of course, as yet few have gotten on so far. But one of our boys entered college this fall," he added proudly, "and we expect to have several there another year."

They visited the carpenter and the blacksmith shops, the printing office, the two jails, the alms-house, and the library. Then they went over to the hotel, where Phil and Dan, the centre of a crowd of boys, were asking and answering eager questions.

A wide piazza ran around three sides of the hotel.

"The boys have christened this piazza, Broadway," Brother explained. "It is the favorite promenade and gathering-place after work is over."

He led the way into the hotel and up the stairs, opening one door after another into the boys' rooms. They were all neat, but most of them were small; some held nothing but a cot, washstand, and chair, while others had books, pictures, sofa pillows, and more and better furniture.

"I'd like to see the room Phil is to have," suggested Phil's father in a doubtful tone. He was mentally recalling the large airy room, with its luxurious appointments, which his boy occupied at home.

"I thought you would like to see it, so I brought the key. This is the one," and Brother unlocked and opened a door.

Mr. Boyd shook his head as he looked around the bare little place.

"I suppose I can send up some furniture and things to make it a little more homelike," he remarked.

"Certainly, if you like, only, Mr. Boyd, I warn you that your son will very likely sell off his furniture — and his extra clothing too — when his money gives out. That's the way that boys who will not work usually do."

"But I am hoping that Phil *will* work." There was a wistful note in the father's voice. "If I did n't hope for that, there would be no use in leaving him here."

"I too hope so," Brother returned quickly, "but you must not expect it immediately; and, Mr. Boyd," he added earnestly, "I must beg — however he may plead for it — that you send him no money. To do that is simply to undo all that his experience here might otherwise do for him."

"Yes — I understand that," Mr. Boyd answered with a sigh, as they went down stairs, and across to the little stone chapel.

Before he left the next morning, he handed Brother a check for a hundred dollars.

"Use it for my boy in case of sickness — or any emergency," he said "and if more should be needed you have only to send me word."

Phil was waiting outside the cottage to say good-by to his father.

"It's jolly here, father!" he exclaimed, his face all alight with interest. "I'm going to have no end of fun — you tell Grace so."

"Walk on a little way with me, Phil," his father answered. "When the carriage overtakes us you can turn back."

In that short walk some earnest words were spoken, — words that left the boy's face very grave as he turned back alone, while his father drove on to the station. But when the carriage had disappeared around a curve in the road, Phil speedily banished his unwonted gravity, and was ready once more to get "all the fun there was" out of his novel surroundings. When he reached the green, he stopped short and looked around with surprise.

"Hello, where's everybody?" he exclaimed, as he crossed over to the hotel. Broadway was deserted but for little Jack Halliday — commonly known as Jack Horner — who was racing across it, drawing a battered tin cart with only three wheels behind him.

"Where are all the boys, Jack?" Phil asked.

"Gone to work, course," returned the child, staring

at him with round blue eyes. "Why don't you go to work?" he added.

"Oh, I don't like work," laughed Phil, carelessly. He strolled up and down Broadway once or twice, then wandered over to the carpenter shop, from which came the shrill scratching sound of a buzz-saw. Leaning on the sill of an open window, he looked in.

"What you making?" he inquired of the boy at the saw.

"The trimmings for the piazza of the new cottage," answered the boy.

Phil reached in and picked up a bit of pine, and whittled as he talked, until the "boss" carpenter remarked drily:

"See here, young man, I guess Tom will get more work done if you go somewhere else," and at that, with a laugh, Phil tossed aside his stick, slipped his knife in his pocket, and sauntered over to the new cottage, where three boys were at work shingling the roof.

One of them looked down at him with a friendly smile.

"Hello, Dan, that you?" Phil called. "I'm coming up there."

"Come along — ladder's free," shouted Dan, as he brought his hammer down square on the nail he held.

Phil ran up the ladder and settled himself astride the peak of the roof, his back against the chimney.

"What you working for to-day? You don't have to?" he asked with a curious glance at Dan.

"Like it!" was Dan's brief response.

Phil answered that with an incredulous whistle. "*Like* to work!" he cried "Well, you're the first fellow ever I saw that liked work so well that he'd do it when he did n't have to. Say — ain't you most too good for this world?"

Dan grinned and reached for another shingle.

"I don't like to loaf—that's all," he answered quietly.

"That's where we differ—I do," returned Phil, lazily. "What's this cottage for—when it's done?"

One of the other boys answered that with quick interest.

"It's the first of the homes," he explained. Brother says hotel life ain't good for us, and he's going to have us all live in families in separate cottages as soon as he can get money enough for the houses. We do all the work, you know, but the lumber and stuff cost a lot."

"And he's going to let some of us buy this cottage as soon as it's done," added the other boy.

"Buy it? Not really?" questioned Phil.

"Yes, really; he'll sell it for twelve hundred dollars. Of course no one feller's got that much, but some of 'em will club together and pay what they can, and Brother'll let the rest be on mortgage."

"And will the fellows that buy it live here?"

The boy nodded. "Yes, I guess so—or else they'll rent out their shares."

"That's a fine scheme—to buy a house so," Phil

commented with the air of a man of business. "I believe I'll take a share in this cottage — only I must have first choice of rooms. Guess I'll keep two — a sitting room and a bedroom."

One of the boys tucked his tongue into his cheek and winked at his companion.

"My! Don't the dude put on airs, though!" he whispered, as he reached for a fresh supply of shingles.

Phil soon tired of his uncomfortable seat on the ridge pole, and went off towards the Grand. As he was crossing the elm-shaded green, a boy with a hook nose and small twinkling black eyes suddenly appeared at his side.

"Say, got anything to sell?" He caught Phil's sleeve, and put the question in a husky whisper, though there was no one within hearing.

Phil jerked his arm away with a frown. "What are you driving at?" he demanded roughly.

"Needn't get huffy!" growled the other, his face darkening. "I only asked if you had anything you wanted to exchange for republic money. You've got to have it to pay for board and everything here, and" — this with unconcealed scorn — "*you* ain't the sort that'll earn much — any fool can see that. When you do get short and want cash, just remember Reuben Baum, will ye? I'll do as well by ye as anybody else."

"Huh!" growled Phil, and, unceremoniously turning his back on Mr. Reuben Baum, he marched on with his head up.

"Regular Jew money-lender — that's what he is!" he declared to himself.

Baum stood for a moment looking after Phil, and in his small eyes there was a flicker of anger. "Jest wait a while," he muttered, "an' we'll see whose head is highest!"

Phil wandered into the library and read for a while, then, with a yawn, he flung aside his book, and went over to Broadway.

"Thank goodness, it's most noon! Awful stupid here when there's nobody 'round!" he grumbled, as he flung himself down on a bench, and began to whistle softly. From the kitchen he caught now and then the rattle of pans and dishes, or the sound of girlish laughter, followed by the sharp voice of the big raw-boned woman who superintended the cooking.

Jack Horner, with his dilapidated tin cart, had wandered over into the shady driveway, and, further off, beyond the driveway, half a dozen boys, in brown and white striped suits, were digging a ditch.

"Glad I'm not in their shoes," Phil said to himself, "only I guess they haven't any," he added with a laugh. "Hello, here come the president and the judge."

The two officials had their heads together in an interested confab, but they stopped talking as they joined Phil on Broadway. The president stretched himself out in an easy attitude on a bench, and the judge perched on the piazza railing. As Phil turned to speak to the president, the bell on the school-

house rang out, and at once the green, so quiet before, was alive with gay voices and strong young figures.

Out of the shops they came — out of the school-house and the printing office, from the great barn and the wide-stretching fields, from the library and from the laundry, the girls and boys came trooping, and all laughing and talking or singing.

Phil's face brightened. "They're a jolly crowd," he thought, "and there's a mighty pretty girl too,—prettiest one I've seen here." He turned hastily to the judge. "Say — who's that pretty girl coming across the green with the snub-nosed one in the brown dress? Introduce me to her, will you?"

"Introduce ye to nothin'" growled the judge with a black frown. "If you want to speak to her — speak!" For as it chanced, the one whom Phil had styled the "snub-nosed one" was the judge's sister. The president chuckled and said nothing.

Phil cast an angry glance at the judge, but followed his advice. He had always been a favorite among the girls he knew at home, and confidently expected to be equally popular here. So as the two girls came up the steps he took off his hat and said to the pretty one, —

"As there seems to be no one to introduce me will you allow me to introduce myself? I am Phil Boyd, very much at your service."

Now Phil, with his handsome face, his fine clothes and his polite manner, was a contrast to the other boys, and the difference was in his favor. The girl

smiled back at him, and responded frankly to his evident desire to be on friendly terms.

"I'm Rose Snyder," she said, "and this is my best friend, Kitty Hyde."

Kitty Hyde had a bright dark face, with a small nose powderd with freckles and somewhat inclined to turn up. Her quick eyes studied the face of the boy for a moment, then, as he devoted himself to Rose, Kitty glanced at her brother on the railing, and seeing the frown with which he was watching the two, she laughed softly and crossed over to him.

"What's the matter, Bob?" she inquired in a low tone. Her brother looked at her and the mirth in her eyes brought a dull red across his dark face. Then she stooped and whispered in his ear, "Don't fret, Bob — Rosie's no fool."

But already Broadway was thronged with a noisy crowd, and as Rose passed on, Phil watched and listened to all that was going on about him, now and then asking a question or throwing in a remark. A string of small boys perched along the railing, their blue overalls flapping about their sun-burned ankles, and the judge, feeling his dignity endangered by such company, got down and beckoned the president off to the further end of the piazza, where they resumed their interrupted conversation.

A boy on roller skates clattered by, forcing a passage through the crowd, and after him raced two others, their feet slapping noisily on the painted floor, as one of them shouted, —

"Ain't this a daisy place for bare feet!"

Then, like a dark shadow — across the green came the chain-gang, each boy with his hands on the brown striped shoulders of the boy in front. They cast wistful or sullen glances at the gay groups on Broadway, but they were barred out, and in silence they passed on to the jail.

Then came a rattle of dishes on the dining room tables, and appetizing odors were wafted to the noses of the hungry girls and boys outside.

"Aw there, hurry up that dinner!" cried one bare-footed youngster, flattening his snub nose against the screen door as he looked in with longing eyes.

The next minute there rose a joyous shout.

"Here's Tootsie! Here's Tootsie! Dinner-r-r!" and in the middle of the green the bugler appeared, sending his harmonious summons ringing out over the hillside; but long before it ended Broadway was deserted. The whole crowd had swarmed into the dining-room, all except a few who were racing over to the Caboose. One alone remained, a forlorn youngster in ragged overalls, pinned up at one side with a rusty nail. He sat on the railing where he could look in through the screen door and sniff the odor of meat and vegetables and soup. Phil's seat was near the door, and looking up as his soup plate was removed, he caught a hungry glance from the eyes of the boy on the railing.

"Why does n't he come in to dinner?" he asked of the one next him at the table.

“ ‘Cause he’s dead broke, an’ ye can’t eat ’thout ye pay, here,” was the reply.

Phil’s face flushed, and springing up, he went out to the boy and said in a low tone, —

“ You come on in ; I ’ll foot the bill.”

The boy waited for no second invitation, but with a mumbled “ Thanky,” he slipped through the screen door and tumbled hungrily into the only vacant seat.

From a nearby table, Rose and Kitty had noticed Phil’s impulsive action, and the former whispered to her friend, “ Was n’t that nice of him ? ”

“ Yes ; that’s more than I expected of him,” returned Kitty.

Her brother, overhearing the low-spoken comments, leaned over and whispered maliciously in her ear, —

“ Maybe you think it was nice, too, for him to call you ‘ that snub-nosed girl.’ That’s what he did ! ”

“ No, I don’t ! ” snapped Kitty, sharply. “ That was horrid of him ! ” “ As if I did n’t know well enough how homely I am without any reminder from him ! ” she added to herself.

Hyde smiled, well satisfied with the change his words had wrought in Kitty’s expression ; then he stuck out his lips and gave an unpleasant laugh as he bent over and remarked to the president, “ That chap wants to show off before the girls ; that’s what he did that for, you know.”

CHAPTER IV.

JUNE APPLES.

WHEN at half past two the bell reminded the citizens that it was time to resume work, the boys who were shingling the new cottage sung out, "Come on, Dennis!" as they started towards the small building; but Will Anderson flung his arm across Dan's shoulder, calling back to them, "He's coming with me this afternoon, ain't you, Dan? You said you were going to work in our shop."

"So I am," said Dan, "but I won't begin to-day. I'm going to start in reg'lar there to-morrow."

"All right, then, I'll let you off this afternoon; but I must skip or I shall be docked," Will answered as he went off on the run.

Phil, left alone on the bench, looked ruefully after Dan, who had walked off with the shinglers.

"They all want him and nobody seems to want me," he thought. "I don't see why. The fellows at home always counted me into everything." Suddenly a wave of homesickness swept over him. "I was a big fool to come here!" he told himself, moodily. Presently he looked up to see Dan coming back across the green.

"What's the matter? Concluded not to work after all?" he questioned, his face brightening.

Dan nodded and dropped down on the bench beside him. "Not this afternoon," he said carelessly. "What you goin' to do?"

"I don't know," yawned Phil. "It's deadly dull here; wish I was back home."

"Dull? I think it's fine!" cried Dan, his eyes shining.

"Oh, you!" Phil's tone was disdainful. "I suppose 't is fine — for you."

Dan glanced at him quickly, and instinctively moved a little further away on the bench. He did not say that he had come back just because he had fancied that Phil looked lonesome. Presently Phil spoke again: "We might go fishing over to the pond — what do you say?"

"All right. Got any hooks?"

"Of course. Did you suppose I expected to catch the fish with my fingers?"

Dan laughed good-naturedly, and followed Phil as he started up, saying:

"Come on up to my room and I'll get my tackle."

When they reached the little room, Dan gazed about with frankly admiring eyes. "It's mighty nice here," he said.

"Nice!" Phil's tone expressed the utmost contempt. "Why, it's nothing but a — dog kennel! You just ought to see my room at home! Where do you sleep?"

"Up in the garoot."

"Well, you are a fool!" Phil declared, which very frank expression of opinion did not seem to disturb Dan in the least.

The garoot was the name the boys had given to the big attic room in the hotel building. Along the walls of this attic were ranged a dozen or more cots which were occupied by boys who had not money to pay for private rooms. In most cases this meant boys who were too lazy to work regularly.

Dan did not resent Phil's remark, he simply ignored it.

"What's in that?" he inquired, pointing to a leather case hanging by a strap to a nail.

"Field glasses." Phil took them out and handed them over. "Look way off on that hill there," he said.

Dan obeyed. In a moment he exclaimed delightedly, "Ginger! Ain't that fine, though! Why I can see a boy and a dog way over on the top of the hill—see 'em just as plain!"

"Of course! Here, let me look."

Phil adjusted the glasses and swept the field of vision. Then he handed them back to Dan.

"Look over across the pond, just in line with that old dead tree. Can you see a boy over there in the bushes?"

"Yes," Dan said after a moment.

"What's he doing?"

"He's got a bag, or something, and he's trying to hide it, I believe."



Phil snatched the glass again.

"You're right; that's just what he's doing. See his face?"

"No," — Dan had the glasses again, and spoke slowly; then, in a different tone, "I do now. It's Reub Baum, ain't it?"

"That's what I thought. Let me see again." For several minutes Phil continued to look through the glasses; then he flung them aside and turned to Dan.

"He hid something there in that clump of bushes, and then he hurried off. I say, Dan, let's go over there and see what 't was."

"All right; come on."

They hurried down stairs and were running towards the pond when a boy came racing after them.

"Hold on!" he shouted. "Stop, you fellers!"

"Well, what's the matter?" questioned Phil, impatiently, as the boy caught up with them.

"Where you going?" he demanded.

"None o' your business!" retorted Phil, promptly, starting on again.

But Dan did not follow. He pointed to a star on the boy's jacket.

"Wait, Phil, he's a cop; a policeman," he said.

"What if he is?" Phil paused to ask.

The boy walked towards him. "Yes, I'm a policeman," he declared, "an' you've got to tell me where you're goin', or I'll arrest ye." His tone was authoritative.

"Huh! I'd like to see you try it." Phil's tone was aggressive. "I could lick you with one hand."

"Mebbe so, an' mebbe not!" the small policeman retorted, "but if I jest blow my whistle I'll have a dozen fellers here in a minute to back me up."

"That's so; better tell him," Dan whispered in Phil's ear.

"The latter scowled, but finally answered, grudgingly, "Well, if you must know, we're going over to the pond."

"Can't go there without permission from Brother or one of the helpers." The policeman's tone now was triumphant.

"Great Scot! Is there anything a fellow *can* do in this place?" Phil cried out angrily. "Say, Dan, run back to the office, will you, and get permission?"

Dan ran off at once, and Phil turned his back on the policeman and glowered at nothing in particular until Dan returned.

"All right," he said, "we can go if you can swim. You can, can't you?"

"Of course," replied Phil, with a short, angry laugh, "but I didn't expect to go swimming in the bushes."

"No, but Brother says the pond is deep, and they never let boys that can't swim go there alone, 'cause they might tumble in."

"Shucks!" growled Phil, scornfully, and as they

walked on he added, "I'd like to wring that fellow's neck!"

"He only did his duty," Dan reminded, quietly.

But Phil's hot temper kept him grumbling until they reached the old dead tree and began their search. It took some time, for there were many clumps of bushes to be examined, but at last, with a shout of satisfaction, Dan pulled out a bagful of June apples.

"Hi! That's gay!" Phil snatched up a red-cheeked specimen and took a big bite of it. "Pitch in, Dennis."

Dan eyed the fruit with longing eyes, but he did not touch it.

"'Tain't ours," he said slowly.

"Whose is it?"

"Baum's, I s'pose."

"How do you know but what he stole it?"

"Well, but if he did, that don't make it ours," Dan persisted.

Phil tossed away the core and picked up another apple.

"You're a great one, Dan," he remarked. "Don't you see how 't is? That money-lender, Baum, is a smuggler too. He's hidden these apples here, meaning to smuggle 'em into his room after dark and then sell 'em same's he was selling that taffy this morning. It's always lawful to seize smuggled goods — don't you know that?"

Dan shook his head doubtfully, his steady eyes

watching Phil's face. "But, that don't give us a right to the goods, does it?" he objected gravely.

Phil laughed again. "Well, now, see here, Dan, I'll tell you what I'm going to do." He opened the bag and peered into it, pulling over the fruit.

"There's full half a bushel of apples here — must be a hundred or more of 'em — and I'm going to take 'em back with us, and to-night we'll bring 'em out after supper and treat all hands to June apples. How's that?"

"'Tain't right — we'd be as bad as Baum," Dan insisted obstinately.

"No we would n't. They couldn't call it smuggling when we give the stuff away — make no profit on it," Phil declared, a gathering anger in his eyes. To think of a common fellow like Dan Dennis standing up so against him!

Dan shook his head again, but this time in silence.

"Well, Dan Dennis, when I ask you for your company again I guess you'll know it!" Phil's voice was hard with offended pride. "You have a mighty high opinion of yourself, I think. Maybe you'll change your opinion of *me* when I tell you what I meant all the time to do. I'm going to hide the plaguy old apples on the other side of the pond — somewhere within bounds — and after supper I'll bring 'em out, as I said, and treat the crowd; and if Baum says anything — or even if he does n't" — he added hastily, "I'll pay him for the whole lot — every confounded apple — so there now!"

He flung angrily aside, half turning his back, and waiting for Dan's answer. It came promptly.

"All right Phil, if you pay for 'em, I'll help you hide 'em."

"Oh, your tender conscience is satisfied, is it?" Phil said with an angry sneer.

"Phil!" There was something in Dan's voice that made the other boy wheel quickly and face him. There was something in his face, too, that scattered Phil's anger in an instant. Dan stepped closer and spoke in a low tone full of earnest — almost solemn — feeling. "Phil — my father was n't a good man. He died in prison. 'I used to go there to see him when I was a little chap, and I made up my mind then that *I* was n't going to die in prison, and I *ain't*. Do you understand? I'm rough and — well, I ain't the tony sort like you, but I'm tryin' to live straight and do things on the square — see?"

A flush spread over Phil's cheeks as he met the clear, straightforward glance of Dan's eyes. For an instant he saw himself with all his advantages and opportunities, in comparison with this other boy, and it was not Phil Boyd who shone in that comparison. He turned suddenly and dropped his arm across Dan's shoulders.

"You're all right, Dennis," he said almost gently, "only — give me credit for meaning all right, too. Come on now — we'll find a place to hide these. Wish we could see Baum's face when he comes to carry off his contraband stuff!" he ended with a chuckle.

They hid the bag of fruit in a secure place within bounds, and then went back to the hotel. As they reached the piazza they saw a boy tacking a notice to the bulletin board by the dining-room door. Phil read it, Dan looking over his shoulder.

“NOTICE

All citizens are urged to attend the town-meeting on the twenty-fifth, as business of importance is to be considered.

SAMUEL OLIVER,
Secretary of State.”

“Wonder what the important business is,” commented Phil. “Anyhow I’m glad of the town-meeting to fill up the time.”

“Seems to me they have lots to fill up the time here,” Dan returned.

“Think so? Oh, I don’t know — it’s pretty slow, I think. Guess I’ll go and get on some decent clothes,” Phil said, as he turned away from the bulletin board.

Dan gave him a curious look. To him, with the one suit he possessed on his back — and a shabby suit at that — Phil’s clothes seemed good enough for any occasion.

Half an hour later Phil appeared on Broadway in an immaculate suit of white duck, with a gay silk yachting scarf tied loosely under his collar. The big piazza was thronged then, and at sight of Phil there was a moment’s silence, broken by a shrill whistle from a small boy hanging head downward over the railing.

"Oh my!" he yelled, "Here's the dude inside a pair of white ducks. Jimminy! Ain't he swell!"

There was a chorus of laughter then, and a storm of teasing comment that brought an angry flush to Phil's face; but he caught, too, admiring glances from some of the girls, and smoothing his ruffled plumage he did his best to take the chaff good-naturedly.

There was a twinkle in Brother's kind eyes when, after supper, he appeared on Broadway and saw Phil. "He looks like a white swan among a crowd of barn-yard fowls," he said to himself.

But a chorus of glad voices was shouting delightedly, "Here's Brother! Here's Brother!"

"Oh, Brother, give us a quickstep — *do* give us a quickstep!" pleaded two of the girls, and, with a flourishing bow, he offered an arm to each, and the three went dancing gaily down the long promenade together. Instantly, the other girls and boys fell into line behind them, and, up and down, swept the merry laughing train till, breathless and exhausted, Brother dropped down on one of the benches, faintly begging for mercy.

Then, with gay flings at each other, and bursts of rollicking laughter, they gathered around him; but after a little they grew more quiet, and the talk became graver and more earnest as they watched the sun setting across the valley, till the evening shadows began to deepen under the great trees on the green.

Then Kitty Hyde exclaimed, "O Brother, you

did n't bring Dear Delight. Please send somebody for it—please!”

“Please, oh, please, Brother!” a score of pleading voices took up the cry.

“Well, run along, somebody, and ask the little mother to give it to you,” Brother answered, and before the words were fairly out of his mouth, two boys were racing pell-mell across the green; but they came back slowly, bringing with utmost care a violin case.

“To the oaks! To the oaks!” the cry rang out, and with a rush of quick young feet, and a tumult of gay young voices, the citizens seized upon Brother and swept him over to three great oaks that spread their branches on a grassy knoll across the driveway. Here they seated him in state on the one bench, and flung themselves down on the grass around him—a goodly gathering indeed, for there was a full hundred of them.

“What will you have first?” Brother asked, as, with tender fingers, he lifted from its case his violin, that the girls had long ago christened “Dear Delight,” and began softly to draw the bow across the strings.

“Wait a minute, the little mother’s coming!” somebody cried, and it was pretty to see two of the biggest, roughest-looking boys rush down the slope, and, offering each an arm, proudly escort her to a seat at Brother’s side.

Then a sudden hush fell on the noisy groups as the low sweet notes of the violin trembled on the air.

One favorite after another was called for, and Brother played them all, while around the knoll the shadows deepened, and the soft night wind rustled gently in the treetops overhead.

When it was quite dark, electric lights began to gleam here and there over the grounds until the clear, silvery glow banished all but the deepest shadows.

At last Brother laid Dear Delight aside. "I've done my part, now I want my reward. Sing," he said.

And Will Anderson, leaning against one of the big trees, began to sing, his clear, sweet voice hardly seeming at first to break the tender silence. But soon one and another joined in, and the song rose and swelled into a volume of glad harmony. And the songs grew more merry and rollicking until they ended in the rendering of "Our Republic" with an enthusiasm and a volume of sound that somewhat impaired the harmony.

After that, Brother went off with his wife on one arm and his violin under the other, while a chorus of gay and affectionate good-nights followed them until the door of their cottage closed behind them.

In his enjoyment of the music, Phil had quite forgotten what he had planned, but as Brother and his wife disappeared, the boy suddenly remembered and, nudging Dan, he whispered hastily, —

"Come on quick, and get those apples."

Dan stumbled to his feet and followed Phil — glad

that the friendly shadows under the trees hid his eyes just then from every one. Dan had never heard any music which stirred his boyish heart like the strains that Brother had drawn from Dear Delight.

"I'm glad I'm here, — I'm *awful* glad I'm here," he was saying to himself as he hurried on.

"Hold on, you citizens — don't scatter yet!" shouted Phil, as he and Dan returned, the heavy bag over the shoulder of the latter. "Hand 'em out, Dan, — to the girls, first, of course."

"Hi, apples! That's fine!" cried a big chap, plunging his hand into the bag and grabbing two.

"Hold on, you!" exclaimed Phil sharply. "Wait till all the girls are supplied — then one apiece all around — else somebody 'll have to go without. Hello, Baum — have an apple?"

Baum had come hurrying up out of the darkness and was bending down examining the apples and the bag. Now he clutched Phil's arm with a grip that left its mark, as he exclaimed, in a low, furious tone, —

"You'll pay for this, mister, pay for every single apple *double*, and don't you forget it!"

"What's that, Reub? Speak up so we can all hear!" Phil cried gaily, but Baum had vanished in the shadows.

Curfew rang out at nine, and with three cheers for the dude and his apples, and then three more for Brother and the little mother, the citizens fell into line and escorted the girls to their lodgings, lingering to sing under their windows a verse of "Good-night,

Ladies," and then dropping once more into the great favorite "Our Republic" the boys retired to their own rooms, and soon the silence of night reigned on the elm-shaded lawn.

Baum, muttering threats of vengeance, had just gotten into bed when there came a loud knock on his door.

"Who's there? Clear out whoever you are!" he yelled angrily.

A silver dollar was snapped under his door — went skating across the bare floor and fell with a ringing sound as it struck the leg of a chair.

"There's twice as much as they were worth, with no revenue tax out!" sung out Phil, carelessly; then his footsteps sounded along the corridor, his door slammed, and all was still.

Reuben hopped out of bed and felt around the floor in the darkness till his fingers clutched the dollar, then he went back to bed, his anger against Phil no whit the less.

"This is jest so much extry, but it don't let you off none, Mr. Dude!" was his last waking thought.

CHAPTER V.

A DOUBTFUL VICTORY.

PHIL, reading in the library, heard a voice at his elbow, and looked up to find a pair of round blue eyes looking curiously at him. "Say," the owner of the blue eyes remarked, "the's a awful big box come up from the village for you. Brother says where'll you have it?"

"For me, bub?" Phil returned, "Well, tell them to trot it over here," and he threw aside his book and sauntered out on to the piazza.

Presently the big box came over, a string of boys, — the vagrants of the republic, — following at the tail of the express wagon.

Phil was one of those boys who prefer poor company to none, so he made no objection to these who hung around, curious to see what the great box contained. He even utilized them — sending one for screw-driver and hatchet, and when the box was opened allowing any who would to help him carry the contents up to his room, for the box itself was too heavy to be taken up the stairs.

Mr. Boyd had sent everything that he and Grace could think of to add to the comfort of his son's bare

little room; pictures, books, hanging shelves, sofa pillows, a table cover, a toilet set, a supply of fine soap and towels, and even a pretty desk, came out of that big packing case; and when all were arranged Phil had by far the prettiest room at Hadley. The vagrants spread a glowing account of it, and after working hours Phil had a steady stream of callers to see, question, and admire — all which suited him very well and added to his sense of his own importance. But when there was nothing more that he could do to his room and he settled down to the regular routine of life at the republic, he found time hang heavy on his hands. He seemed to be about the only one who had no regular work of any kind. Dan was working steadily in the carpenter shop, to the great satisfaction of Will Anderson. Dan seemed to have the gift of winning friends; he was already a favorite.

"He does n't half try, and yet somehow he makes everybody like him," Phil grumbled to himself one morning as, with his hands in his pockets, he stood looking after Dan and Will going over to the shop together. "I don't see how he does it," he added discontentedly.

Then he recalled a talk that he had had with Brother the night before. Brother had urged him to go to work, and Phil had declared that there was nothing that he wanted to do. Of course he didn't want to be a farmer or a blacksmith or a carpenter or printer, and there was nothing else. He might like to be a lawyer, but of course he was n't going to buckle down

to study law books — in summer, too — and they said a fellow could n't be a lawyer without he passed a civil service examination first. A civil service examination, indeed! Phil's brows came together in a frown. It was n't likely he was going to peg away at books in this place when he had come here just on purpose to get away from books — and work. Phil recalled the grave, sorrowful look on Brother's face, and he shook his head impatiently, and told himself that, after all, he believed he was a fool to come here, it was n't half as much fun as he had expected.

Then the Secretary of State, Sam Oliver, came over from the library, and paused a moment before the bulletin board, reading the notices.

"What's the important business to come before your town meeting to-night?" Phil inquired. He did not much like the secretary, but he liked his own thoughts still less just then.

Evidently the dislike was mutual, for the secretary glanced coldly at Phil, over his shoulder, muttered "Humph!" and marched off. Phil looked after the big slouching figure with a scowl.

"If *I'm* ever president of this republic, *you'll* never be in office — not if I know myself!" he mentally declared, which declaration, however, would not, had he heard it, have had any very depressing effect on the secretary.

For some days past Phil had noticed that there seemed to be a great deal of button-holing going on. One of the leading boys would corner two or three

of the younger ones and whisper to them with much impressive gesticulation. A few of the girls' carried on similar discussions, but most of them seemed to be either simply curious or careless, rather than keenly interested.

"What's it all about! What's up, Dan, do you know?" Phil asked, when Dan drifted around to him after dinner that day.

Although Dan was getting to be much in demand among the boys there was a singular faithfulness about him; he never forgot a few words that Phil's father had said to him that morning before he went away. Besides he really liked Phil, though it seemed as if the latter had not given him very much reason to do so.

Now Dan answered promptly, "It's something about the length of the working day, I b'lieve. We'll find out all about it at the meeting this afternoon. It's at 4.15 sharp," he added, glancing at the chapel clock.

The meeting was to be in the townhall, a large room over the library, and before the doors were open there was a crowd of girls and boys pressing about it, eager to secure seats where they could see and hear everything—and be seen and heard as well. When the door was opened there was a noisy rush and scramble, and few of the girls succeeded in getting beyond the middle of the room; so they had to content themselves with back seats. In a very few minutes every seat was filled and the late comers

were obliged to stand along the walls. Brother and one of the helpers came in late, but seats had been reserved for them on the platform.

The vice-president took the chair, the clerk sat ready with pad and pencil, and the assembly proceeded to business; but very little attention was paid by most to the bills first introduced, and they were carried or voted down with careless rapidity; while a low murmur of excited talk broke out now in this corner, now in that, and an air of eager impatience and suppressed excitement prevailed.

Kitty Hyde was the first girl to take part in the proceedings. It was she who passed a slip of paper to the moderator, who handed it over to the clerk, and he at once read it in the high monotonous tone that he considered appropriate to his office, while a sudden hush fell upon the room.

"Be it enacted," droned the clerk, "that that clause in the constitution of the Hadley Junior Republic, prohibiting girls holding public office, be stricken out."

There was a little ripple of excitement now. The eyes of many of the girls turned towards Kitty's seat, and there was an inclination to applaud, when Rose Snyder stood up and timidly spoke a few words in favor of the bill. It was rarely that Rose was heard in such a meeting. The next moment a big rough boy was on his feet, hurling at the chair loud and ponderous arguments against the measure.

Then another girl spoke for it, tearing the previous

speaker's arguments to tatters with her nimble tongue and ready wit. This was Dora Street, the champion speaker of the girls' party. Perhaps she hit a little too hard; at any rate, as she took her seat half a dozen boys rose together clamoring for recognition, and hot and heavy was the wordy contest that followed. The few boys who favored the bill were overpowered by numbers; and of the girls, few even of those most deeply interested had the courage and ability to express themselves effectively under the scathing fire of the ruling party; and so the bill was defeated, amid loud and exultant cheers from the opposition.

"What are they kicking up such a row over that for, anyhow?" Dan whispered to Will Anderson, next whom he was sitting.

"Why, ye see some of the fellers are afraid that if they once give 'em a chance to hold office, the girls 'll get 'em all — all the offices, I mean," explained Will. "*I* don't mind," he added; "*I*'d just as soon have the girls in office as the boys."

"So'd I, if they're fit for it," returned Dan, soberly.

"Who's that up now? Oh, I see; it's Baum!" Phil exclaimed.

"Wish those chaps 'd stop yelling an' let us know what he's talking about," said Dan.

"They won't, because they don't want to hear him. He's always trying to put through some bill to help him rake in more cash," another boy declared, as the

cheering, stamping, and clapping continued, in spite of the efforts of the chairman to restore order.

Finally, the boy next Baum yanked him forcibly down into his seat, and immediately Tom Sales sprang up. A burst of cheers and whistles greeted his appearance; then every sound ceased so suddenly that the chairman had thumped his mallet two or three times on the table before realizing that the necessity for pounding was over, he dropped into his seat with a sheepish grin on his flushed face. At that there was a burst of merriment, but as Tom handed a paper to the chairman, silence fell again, and every ear was strained to listen.

"Be it enacted," the clerk's heavy voice droned out, "by the citizens of the H. J. R. that eight hours of labor, school included, shall constitute a full day's work."

Before the last words were fairly out of the clerk's mouth, there was a perfect storm of hoots, yells, cheers, and groans, mingled with a few sibilant hisses and cries of "No!" "No!" "No!" from the girls.

But now Brother raised his hand, and instantly there was silence again as a boy with rough red hair and a face liberally powdered with freckles rose to speak. This was Jack—commonly known as Pony—King.

"I think eight hours is plenty long enough for a workin' day," he declared. "I, for one, always feel good an' ready to quit 'fore I've worked that long."

There was a ripple of laughter, and Will Anderson

whispered in mock apologetic tone to Dan, "Pony can't help it; he was born tired, you know."

"I think eight hours is long enough," — it was Judge Hyde speaking now, — "and I can't see why the girls are not satisfied to have it so. I don't believe they want to work more than eight hours a day making dresses or trimming hats. This fuss they're making just shows that girls ought not to meddle with public business, anyhow." Through his glasses he cast a severe glance at his sister's face, uplifted eagerly among the girls.

She rose instantly to reply.

"That's all right for the girls who sew and trim hats," she cried, "but how about those who cook and serve the meals? They *have* to work more than eight hours."

"Oh, well, they're only a few; they're in the minority, and we have to consider what is best for the majority!" the judge responded severely. "The majority must rule. That's the fundamental principle of a republic."

"Ha, ha!" snickered Will Anderson, "I thought he'd manage to lug in his 'fundamental' somehow. He always does, you know. Thinks it sounds learned and ju-di-ci-al." He drawled out the last word in mockery of the judge's pompous manner.

Several others expressed their views, then —

"Question! Question! Question!" shouted a score of voices, almost drowning the voice of the moderator as he inquired, —

"Are there any more remarks?"

"Plenty of 'em, but what's the good of talkin'?" grumbled one of the girls who was serving as cook's assistant.

"You're right, Sallie; we're bound to lose!" exclaimed Kitty Hyde. "But girls,—*girls*, listen all of you,—vote solid against it even if we do lose! Let's have the satisfaction of expressing our minds anyhow!"

"Are you ready for the question?" cried the moderator.

"Question! Question!" yelled the mass of boys at the top of their lungs.

"All who are in favor—" began the moderator, and hardly waiting for him to finish stating the question, the boys thundered out a vociferous "Aye!" that made the walls ring again.

"Contrary minds?"

"No!" The protest sounded weak beside the shout that had gone before, but it was a most emphatic and indignant "no." The girls' vote was solid, not one favoring the other side. Phil, Dan, and Will Anderson voted with the girls, but very few of the other boys kept them company.

"There, that's settled—now bring on that court business," exclaimed Hyde, in a tone of satisfaction, and he dismissed the eight-hour law from his mind.

"Come on out, girls,—there's nothing more that we care about to be considered to-day. I've got

something to say to you all — pass the word along. Come over on Broadway.”

The girls swarmed out after Kitty, and the boys who had been standing along the walls slipped into the seats the girls vacated.

When, at half-past five, the meeting adjourned, and the boys appeared on Broadway, they found all the girls gathered on the wide piazza, their faces full of triumph. The moment that the boys appeared, Dora Street cried out, —

“Three cheers for the eight-hour law! Give ’em with a will, girls!”

They gave them with a hearty good-will that amazed and puzzled the boys. There was no sham about it — it was real glee shining in the girls’ bright eyes, and real triumph rang in their unanimous shout. What did it all mean, the boys asked themselves perplexedly. The next moment they understood, for, forming into line, with Kitty and Dora at their head, the girls began to march down the long piazza chanting in chorus, —

“No supper for you boys — no supper for you.

“If you’re to have an eight-hour day, we girls will have it too,”

rang out the gay girlish voices.

The change that came over the faces of the boys then was wonderful to see. No supper! Their jaws dropped, and they looked questioningly into each other’s eyes.

"Oh, I say — has the president signed that bill?" demanded one anxious voice.

"No, not yet."

"Don't let him. Tell him not to."

"Say, fellers — let's get up a petition — quick!"

"Say, girls — Kitty, Dora — say, how much time 'll ye give us if we 'll git up a petition?"

"A petition? We don't want any petition. We approve of your eight-hour law," laughed Kitty over her shoulder.

"Oh, here comes Tyler. Tyler, don't sign it — don't sign the eight-hour bill!" the boys cried, crowding tumultuously around the president, as he tried to elbow his way into the library where the bills were awaiting his signature.

"Yes, sign it! Sign it!" chorused the laughing girls.

"We like the eight-hour day;
You boys shall have your way,"

they chanted gaily, delighted at the chagrin of their late opponents, now so completely at their mercy.

The president pulled out his Waterbury watch.

"Give ye ten minutes to petition," he said with a sympathetic grin at the triumphant girls, and a fat cook peering over their shoulders out of the dining-room door.

But now Bob Hyde's harsh voice rose above the tumult.

"You've paid for your meals, boys, and you're

bound to have them. If we give way to the girls now, we'll have a harder fight next time. Sign the bill, Tyler, sign the bill!" he shouted.

"That's so, judge, we've paid for our meals, and we're bound to have 'em," declared Oliver, as he pushed his way to the side of the judge.

"The girls is lazy, that's wot's the matter!" It was a boy who had spent more than one month in the almshouse who drawled this out, and the girls broke into fresh laughter.

"Sign the bill! Sign the bill! Make it a law," shouted a dozen voices, some angrily, some laughingly, not believing that the girls were really in earnest in such an unheard-of rebellion to authority.

But now from the kitchen issued a procession of the cooks and waiter-girls, singing in jubilant chorus:

"We've worked our eight-hour day,
And now we're going to play.
Hurrah! hurrah! for the eight-hour day!
Hurrah! Hurrah! *Hurrah!*"

In the library the president was signing the bills; outside the boys stood around in a state of disagreeable uncertainty as to the outcome of the contest of wills, and kept sharp watch of the girls who, dividing up into groups, seemed to be getting a deal of amusement out of the affair. One group went off arm and arm down the driveway, another party coming out of the library with story books under their arms strolled off towards the shady knoll under the

oaks, while yet others, waving their bathing suits like banners over their heads, set off in the direction of the swimming pond; but never a girl of them all so much as glanced towards the dining-room or the kitchen. Broadway looked strangely and sadly unfamiliar with never a petticoat visible in all its length and breadth except in the side door where the fat cook stood with her arms akimbo laughing till her face was as red as the beets she had cooked for dinner.

The boys with gloomy and dissatisfied faces drew together and talked the matter over, trying not to hear the merry voices and care-free laughter of the girls over on the knoll.

"And look a-there will ye — the jail-birds too!" cried Oliver wrathfully, as the chain gang suddenly threw down their stone-breakers and marched off — evidently having somehow learned of the new law.

"Well, now, ain't this a fix! Say, you fellers — don't ye wish now you'd voted with the girls like we did?" cried Will Anderson.

"Much good your voting with 'em did *you*!" snapped Hyde, turning sharply upon him. "You cads won't get any more supper 'n the rest of us will."

"All the same we didn't cut off our own noses as *you* chaps did!" retorted Phil, promptly.

"Oh, you hush up, dude! I'll have you up under the vagrancy law before you know where you are," responded Hyde, with a fierce scowl. There had never been any friendliness between these two.

"Say, jedge—ye better be a-trainin' that sister o' yours," observed a bare-footed urchin in ragged blue overalls, with a saucy grin.

The judge frowned at him, and beckoning to the Secretary of State and one or two other officials, marched them all off to the court-house, where they discussed the situation with closed doors.

Half an hour later the bell sounded a tremendous peal, and girls and boys hastened from all directions to the townhall, where another meeting was at once convened. The triumphant girls crowded into their seats together with much giggling and whispering, but when the clerk rose every voice was hushed, and absolute silence reigned when he read from a paper handed him by Will Anderson, a bill declaring that there should be no legal length for a working day in the Hadley Junior Republic.

Then another tumult arose, some of the boys clinging obstinately to the eight-hour day, and the girls saying little, but waiting, with the serenity of those who feel themselves on the winning side, for the issue of the matter. Many of the boys, especially the younger ones, moved by the gnawing of their hungry stomachs sided now with the girls, and quick retorts and stinging jibes flew back and forth, while hot tempers grew hotter and angry voices rose higher as the debate went on, neither side being willing to give in to the other.

"Boys can cook—lots of 'em can. Turn the girls out of the kitchen and give the boys their job.

That'll bring 'em to their senses pretty quick!" Hyde exclaimed with an angry scowl at the untroubled girls.

But at that Dan suddenly popped up and made his brief maiden speech — a maiden speech in more senses than one:

"If the girls can't do the cookin' in eight hours, how can the boys?" he asked, and then dropped quickly back into his seat, his face crimson with confusion at the gleeful clapping of the girls.

"Say — the kid that proposed that eight-hour law is a fool, an' that's all I've got to say!" shouted a round-headed youngster who seemed never to have quite enough to eat.

"An' them that voted for it was jest as big fools — an' I'm one of 'em!" added another repentant — and hungry — youth.

"Three cheers for Smithie!" called Sue Fraley, and Smithie blushed and subsided.

Some of the more obstinate boys argued a while longer for the eight-hour day, but it was evident that most of them were keeping up the fight merely because they were too stubborn to yield. Finally, Jo Meade rose. Meade did not speak often, and when he did, it was usually straight to the point.

"I guess most of us see now," he began, "that that bill we passed was n't a fair one — and we believe in fair play here at the Hadley Junior Republic. I say — if we've made fools of ourselves — and I guess most of us think now that we did — the best thing

we can do is to own up and do what we can to make things right. Hadley believes in its girl citizens. We can't get along without them and we would n't if we could. We never do mean to pass any bill that is n't fair to the girls, and we would n't if we only stopped to think about it. So I'm for this new bill with all my heart, and I hope it will pass without one dissenting voice so the girls will see that we do it because we want to, and not because they've starved us into it."

The house clapped Meade enthusiastically, and not all the clapping was done by the girls either.

But Hyde was up again, doggedly maintaining that there were good points about the eight-hour law that must not be overlooked; and he proceeded to enlarge upon those points at length, while the hungry boys grew more and more restive and impatient. There was something of the bulldog about Hyde. It seemed almost impossible for him to give up a thing upon which he had set his mind.

"He'll keep a-gassin' till bedtime if we don't choke him off," growled Pony King.

But still others applauded the judge and cried, "That's so!" "Yes, yes!" "We won't work more'n eight hours!" to which the other side responded staunchly, "If it's eight hours for one, it's eight hours for all. Fair play and no favor!"

"Some of those boys have changed their minds in a mighty big hurry," Dora Street whispered laughingly to Kitty Hyde.

"Yes," assented Kitty, "and they're getting dreadfully anxious — some of them — because it's most six, and they don't smell any supper cooking."

When the chapel clock struck six, the hungry boys could stand the strain no longer. They would listen to no more arguments.

"Question! Question!" they yelled vociferously, and it was then that Pony King, roused to an unheard-of pitch of enthusiasm, jumped up on a seat and shouted frantically, "Down with the eight-hour law! Vote it down an' ye'll git your supper, boys!"

"Down with the eight-hour law!" the chorus swelled, and when the question was finally put, Judge Hyde was the only one who voted against the bill, which passed amid joyful acclamations from the younger boys.

"Three cheers for the girls!" cried Phil, as the meeting adjourned.

The cheers were given with a will, but after all, the late repentance of the citizens did not avail them that night, for most went supperless to bed, and the prisoners and the paupers for once were objects of envy since they received their rations as usual.

"Can't ye give us jest a little suthin'?" pleaded one hungry boy, his mouth drawn dolefully down at the corners.

"I'm sorry, but it's too late," Dora Street laughed back. "But, Jimmy, we girls are n't going to have any supper either."

Jimmy turned his disconsolate face aside and dug his brown toes into the dirt as he answered, —

“ ‘F you was as hungry as I be, you ‘d cook supper if ‘t was twelve o’clock to-night.”

“ Here, Jimmy,” cried Sue Fraley, “ I ‘ll give you all I ‘ve got,” and she slipped a piece of chewing-gum into his willing hand.

“ Thanky; it’s lots better ‘n nothin’,” he said, as he popped it into his mouth; but his tone was still mournful. Jimmy would think before he voted, next time.

“ Well,” Phil remarked to Dan, “ I ‘m glad the girls got the best of it; but it does seem to me that they might pick us up a supper, even if it is late,” and then he wondered what Grace would say if she knew that he was really hungry and could get nothing to eat. But after all, he did not have to go quite supperless, for presently Will Anderson came to him.

“ I asked Brother if you and I and Dan could go down to the village and get some crackers, or something,” he said. “ I ‘ve got a little United States cash, and I ‘ll stand treat. Brother said we could go, so let’s hurry up, — I ‘m starving. Where’s Dan?”

Phil’s face brightened. “ That’s good!” he exclaimed. “ I ‘ve got some money too, but I did n’t suppose we ‘d be allowed to go off and forage for ourselves.”

They found Dan trying to make Jack Horner forget that he had had no supper. The little fellow’s face was streaked with dirt where he had wiped his

tears away with grimy fingers; but he was laughing and happy when the two boys approached. The sight of Jack perched on Dan's knee reminded Phil of that first time that he ever saw Dan — when he stood against the awful background of smoke and flame, with another little child in his arms. His face softened at the remembrance.

"Come on, Dennis — Brother says you can go down to the village with us. Hurry up!" Will called impatiently.

"You go find Timmy; I'll be back in a little while," Dan said to Jack as he put him gently down.

Jack made no complaint, but he stood leaning over the railing of the piazza, a wistful expression in his eyes, as he gazed after the boys.

At one of the village stores Will and Phil bought crackers and cheese and bananas, and dividing their purchases with Dan the three turned homeward, taking their supper on the way, while they discussed the victory of the girls.

Phil was inclined to grumble. He didn't see, he said again, why the girls could n't have picked up something even if it was late. They'd carried their point, and they ought to be generous.

Will laughed at him. "Pick up something for a hundred or more boarders!" he said. "That would be considerable of a 'pickup,' Phil. They have to begin early to cook a meal for such a crowd as ours." Then suddenly he faced Dan with a look of amazement.

"I say—have you bolted all that a-ready?" he cried.

"No." Dan looked as guilty as if he had been caught red-handed. "I—you don't mind, do you, Will? I'm going to give the rest of mine to Jack Horner and Timmy. Jack's such a little kid, you know, and Tim— You don't mind, do you?" He looked from one to the other of his companions.

"Course not!" returned Will, gruffly, as he choked over the banana he was eating, and thought remorsefully of Timmy Collins, who was "such a skinny little chap, and could n't walk without a crutch."

"Why did n't I think of them?" he asked himself; and then he thought, "That Dennis is a queer chap, but a fellow can't help liking him."

Phil said nothing, but later that evening Dan saw him quietly slip some crackers into the hands of two or three of the hungry little fellows who were wandering disconsolately about the grounds.

CHAPTER VI.

REPUBLIC DAY.

It was a warm day in mid-September. The grass on the green had lost its vivid color and the big elms were putting on the brief golden glory of the autumn. Across the wide valley flashes of scarlet and gold glimmered through the soft haze that lay like a veil over hill and dale.

At the republic the harvest work was well advanced. From the big gardens the young farmers had gathered a noble crop of fruits and vegetables for winter supplies, and the great barn was filled to the rafters with the gleanings of the hay fields. On the grass near the barn was a small mountain of golden squashes and pumpkins, and near them were great heaps of yellow and red cheeked apples ready to be stored away in the cellars for winter use. But there was no farm work to be done to-day, for this was high holiday, — the great occasion of the year at Hadley, — the anniversary of the founding of the Junior Republic there.

Under the old oaks on the knoll the carpenter boys had put up a platform for the speakers and the guests of honor, and now they were bringing all the

chairs that had legs enough to stand on, and arranging them in rows for the visitors from the near-by villages.

The girls were hanging Chinese lanterns among the evergreens with which they had decorated Broadway, and arranging small tables for refreshments along that favorite gathering place. Everybody seemed to be busy and happy—everybody except a few prisoners gazing dolefully through their barred windows, and the three or four paupers who hung around the almshouse kitchen. Even Phil Boyd was busy helping the girls whenever one would accept his offered service.

One of the girls cast a disdainful glance at him as he passed with his arms full of evergreens.

"Phil Boyd is really working for once in his life!" she remarked to Dora Street. "I don't want his help. He looks like a regular tramp." She threw her head back with a scornful sniff as she looked after Phil.

Dora's eyes too followed him with an expression half sympathetic, half impatient.

"I can't make that boy out!" she exclaimed. "He doesn't look like the same fellow that came that day with Dannie Dennis. Remember, Rose, how awfully swell he was that first day in his handsome gray suit and his blue silk scarf?"

Rose nodded, as she tied up a trailing bit of evergreen.

"He was such a handsome fellow!" she said

regretfully. And now he looks so careless and slouchy — I can't bear to see him."

"*Why* won't he work!" cried Kitty, with an impatient stamp on the piazza floor. "I have mighty little sympathy for a boy that can work and won't. I tell you — handsome or no handsome — there's something wrong with a boy that will sell every rag he owns except what is on his back rather than work for his living!"

"Oh, I say — you're too hard on Phil. He is a nice fellow, spite of — of the way he looks and every thing," protested Dan Dennis as he came by just in time to hear Kitty's very emphatic expression of opinion.

"How do you know it was Phil I was talking about?" she demanded promptly.

"Cause, — Dan hesitated, then hurried on, "Guess you all don't think how much harder t' is for Phil than for the rest of us. He ain't never had to work as most of us have."

"Humph! So much the worse for him," returned Kitty, instantly. "Does he expect to be a lazy tramp all his life and sponge on folks that do work?"

Dan winced at that. He could not help seeing how Phil had deteriorated in the three months since he came to Hadley. He knew more about it than the girls did, by far, but with the dogged faithfulness that was part of his nature he clung to Phil, and still believed that he would vet make a new start and redeem himself.

"He ain't a bad fellow — Phil ain't. You'll all see by and by!" he declared as he passed on.

"*You* ain't a bad fellow, Dan Dennis!" Kitty said under her breath, as he disappeared. She turned again to Rose. "Do you know why Dan has n't a big bank account?" she asked.

"Does he lend Phil money?" Rose whispered, and Kitty nodded.

"Don't you tell — but I found it out accidentally the other day. He's been paying Phil's board here at the Grand, and he's boarding himself over at that horrid old Caboose."

"Well! I should think Phil Boyd would be ashamed of himself!" cried Rose, her pretty face flushed with indignation.

Before Kitty could reply, a boy raced across the green, shouting, —

"Hurry up everybody — it's most time for the drill. Company's forming in the armory now."

"Well, I guess we're about through here — come on, girls. Come, Rose — nobody else can have you," cried Kitty, and with arms around each other's waists the two hurried towards the ball ground, followed by a straggling line of girls. Most of the boys had already secured places there.

There was a sharp rat, tat, tat, and the Republic Cadets appeared in their neat gray uniforms with black trimmings — marching over to the ball ground.

"Hi! Don't our soldier boys look fine!" cried a red-cheeked girl who had left the kitchen in such

haste that she had forgotten to take off her checked gingham apron.

"What's the matter with our cadets? *They're* all right!" yelled a tousle-haired boy in overalls as he raced past the girls.

"Why, Dannie, are n't you going to drill with the boys?" exclaimed Kitty, as she and Rose overtook Dan and Phil.

"Nop, not this time," Dan answered cheerily.

"But why not? You've been drilling with them," Kitty persisted.

"Ain't got my uniform yet," replied Dan, flushing uncomfortably.

"Well, you ought to have it then — a boy that has worked as you have and boarded down at that old fifteen-cent restaurant too! What do you do with all your money, Dan? Are you running up a big bank account?"

"Tain't big enough to break the bank yet," laughed Dan, as he quicked his step. He wanted to get away from Kitty's questions, for Phil's sake; but it was for Phil's sake that Kitty was asking them.

Phil's face was flushed and gloomy as they went on. He kicked moodily at a stone and made no response to a friendly remark of Dan's about the splendid weather.

"Suppose you're thinking you could have bought your uniform if you had n't lent me that money," he said gruffly after a moment.

"I was n't thinkin' a thing about the money," Dan

protested hastily. "I don't mind 'bout the uniform, Phil. Guess I have n't drilled long enough yet to make much of a show in the company."

"No, I don't believe you have," Phil agreed, with somewhat unnecessary frankness. After a moment he burst out abruptly, "I'm dead sick of this place anyhow, and I'm not going to hang 'round here much longer to please anybody!"

"O Phil," Dan cried earnestly, "don't talk that way." He hesitated, then added pleadingly, "If you only *would* go to work, Phil, you'd like it after a little while; I'm sure you would."

Phil drew himself up stiffly. "Oh, you'll get your money back, Dan Dennis, even if I do clear out; you need n't worry about that!" he exclaimed in an angry tone.

"Say, Phil, that ain't fair. You know well enough I was n't thinkin' 'bout that money!" Dan burst out in quick, indignant protest.

Phil ignored that and gloomed on bitterly, "I won't work in any of their old shops if they keep me here ten years! Father won't send me a cent, and he won't let Grace send me any money. What does he care if I go shabby or hungry! Look at these old duds I've got on this minute—they don't look much better'n yours—and there's Sam Oliver strutting around in one of my suits this minute, and that Reub Baum—" he ground his teeth savagely,—"Look at him setting up for a swell in the clothes he's jewed me out of!"

"Reub has used you awful mean, an' that's a fact," Dan admitted with ready sympathy. "He ain't paid you half what the things were worth."

"Of course he hasn't!" growled Phil. "That's just what I'm saying, but I had to let him have 'em, for nobody else would buy except Oliver."

"You see the others that had money had put it into the new cottage," Dan reminded him. They were passing the cottage at the moment, and Dan cast an admiring glance at its neatly curtained windows and wide, homelike piazza. Phil glanced at it too, but with gloomy eyes.

"Let's hurry up," cried Dan the next moment, "They're most ready to begin — here comes Brother."

Every citizen was on his — or her — feet as Brother and his wife appeared, and an impromptu guard of honor escorted them to chairs that had been placed for them under one of the trees. Escort duty was never neglected at Hadley. Then the drill began — watched with the keenest interest by every citizen not in uniform.

"Did themselves proud, did n't they!" Sue Fraley exclaimed, when it was over, and the boys in gray, after a little speech of approval from Brother, were marching triumphantly off the field.

"Anyhow, I'm glad that Dan Dennis is going to have his chance now," exclaimed Kitty.

"Danny's the boy! He'll roll them Townies in the dirt, Dannie will!" yelled Pony King, the most

enthusiastic of base-ball "fans," and then he proceeded to invert himself—standing on his head and waving his bare brown feet in the air.

"They're marching double quick, ain't they!" commented one of the girls, twisting around in her place to get a better view of the departing cadets.

"Sales an' the rest of the team are in a rush to get into their ball rigs—that's what's the matter, ain't it, Pony?" said Jo Meade, as he reached over and tickled the sole of one of the waving brown feet. Pony could n't stand that, and his feet came down to the ground in a hurry, as he clutched vengefully at Jo's ankles.

There was always keen interest in the ball games at Hadley, and on this occasion the excitement was greater than usual, because the "Townies" had won the last two games played at Hadley. So presently a great shout went up from scores of voices:

"Here they come! Here they come! Here come the Townies!" and hoots and whistles and cries of challenge, mingled with shouts of derision, greeted the team that was to play against the "Republic Stars."

"Here comes Gooley! Oh, look at the balls he's stuffin' hisself with!" yelled a white-headed urchin, as George—otherwise "Gooley"—Brown appeared on the ground. He wore a blue blouse which formed a convenient receptacle for balls not in use; but the effect was somewhat bulgy.

"Here come our boys! Hurrah for the Republic

Stars — the boys that win! The boys that win!" shouted the republic crowd, and hats and hands and handkerchiefs were waved frantically in the air.

Then from the other side of the ground where the village boys were gathered came an answering cry:

"Three cheers for the Hadley nine — the boys that never get beat!"

Laughter and scoffing cries responded, and the interchange of ball ground compliments was kept up across the field until the visiting team was in position, and the umpire called, —

"Play ball!"

Dan's eyes were shining now and he seemed to fairly radiate courage and enthusiasm. Dan was acknowledged to be the star player of the republic nine. As a pitcher he was not a success, but at first base he had no equal. He not only played splendidly himself, but his enthusiasm and "snap" inspired the others to do their utmost.

To-day the boy was thrilling to his finger tips with the determination to win that game and so do honor to this anniversary day. But the Townies too were determined to win — there was no shirking on either side. Even the Republics could not deny that their opponents had the better pitcher, but they consoled themselves by thinking that the others had no first baseman to equal Dan, and nobody who could rival him at the bat.

It was a hard-fought field — now one side and now the other seeming to have the advantage up to the

eighth inning. In the last half of the eighth, when Tom Sales, who was pitching for the Republics, went to the box, the game was tied with a score of nine to nine.

Tom had been doing finely, but now he appeared suddenly to lose heart. The Townies were hitting him hard, and, growing nervous, he began to pitch wild ball,—seeing which, the village crowd broke into a tumult of yells and shouts calculated to rout him utterly. Tom tried hard to brace up, and at least keep them from increasing their score, but the best he could do was to hold them down to three hits and they succeeded in making one more run.

Even Dan looked anxious when Tom came gloomily back to the bench, and the other pitcher marched over to his place with a triumphant smile on his freckled face. But Dan's voice was cheery and confident as he exclaimed:

“Now, fellers, this is our last chance and we've just got to win out. Why, we *couldn't* let the Townies lick us on this day—our Republic Day—we just *could n't*, you know! That pitcher's balls are as easy as sneezin', if you fellers don't get rattled. Now, Jack—make it a home run—do!”

Jack Dowling looked into Dan's eager face, caught the glow in his eyes, and muttering, “I'll hit that ball if it busts me!” he snatched up his bat and marched to the plate. He did hit the ball and sent it—straight into the pitcher's hands, and one man was out.

Dan groaned under his breath. Could it be that they were going to lose that game, with Brother and the little mother there to see?

"I wish somebody else came next," he thought. "I'm awful 'fraid Johnson won't do nothin'!"

He watched breathlessly — so did everybody else, as Johnson, standing at the plate, swung his stick nervously, and waited for the ball, his eyes following every motion of the pitcher.

"One strike!" The umpire's voice was a bit unsteady; he, too, felt the tension of the moment.

"Two strikes!"

Johnson fanned the air.

"Three strikes!"

What Johnson remarked when he flung his bat on the ground and himself on the bench would have cost him a fine had a policeman been within hearing, unless indeed — as was most likely — even a republic policeman had been conveniently deaf on such a trying occasion.

Dan fairly writhed in his eager impatience. And he must sit there and see Jo Martin wind up the game and complete their disgrace — for Martin could never be depended upon. Sometimes his batting was equal to the best, but in an emergency he was more than likely to "fizzle out" and disappoint everybody.

"Send Dennis! Send Dan to the bat 'stead of Jo!" shouted half a dozen eager voices.

Martin paused, balancing his stick in his hand. He was quite willing to shift the responsibility on to

Dan's shoulders, but the captain of the team shook his head.

"No," he said decidedly, "Jo, you must hit — do you hear? You've *got* to, and then Dan'll follow you up and we'll win out *good*! Mind now, Jo, you've *got* to!"

Jo threw up his chin, set his teeth, and inwardly vowed that he'd "show 'em he war n't no chump!" but his very eagerness made him unsteady and lessened his chances. Twice, indeed, he hit the ball, but both hits were fouls; then came that ominous "Strike!" and then another foul.

The next ball struck Martin on the leg with a force that made him lame for a week after, but with a whoop of delight in spite of the pain, he tossed aside his bat and limped gaily up to first. That was no end better than to be struck out.

And now it was Dan's turn, and hope revived in the hearts of the home players. Pity the bags weren't full, but if Dan could *only* make one of those glorious hits of his! Dan was sure that he could. Why, he *must*, that's all there was about it. He wondered anxiously if Jo would be able to run after the knock he had just received. He glanced towards first, and the hopeful grin on Jo's face reassured him.

But the village pitcher was on his mettle now. He knew all about Dan's ability with the bat, — they had met before, — and he took no chances.

When two strikes had been called, however, he breathed more freely. One more, — only one more,

and the game would be won. He fingered the ball as he looked slowly over the assembled crowd now watching in a breathless hush of eager expectation. Then suddenly his arm went up, and the ball flew swift and straight towards the plate. But Dan was ready for it; he sent it skimming like lightning along the ground, and nobody and nothing could stop it till it rolled into a convenient little hollow on the very edge of the field. The shout that went up then could have been heard for half a mile, and before that ball was recovered, both Martin and Dan had crossed the plate, and every citizen of the Republic was yelling like mad,—all the male citizens at least, and not a few of the girls, as well.

When the next player was caught at first, nobody minded it a bit—not even the boy himself, who, as he trotted back to the bench, grinned cheerfully and admonished Sales to “Shut ’em out this time sure!”

“They won’t make another run unless you get scared, and you ain’t going to do that now,” Gardiner said confidently to Sales, as the latter picked up his glove and started towards the box.

“No,” replied Tom, quickly; “they surely did rattle me last time, but I’m steady now. We’ll shut ’em out this trip, and end up in good shape.”

Dan’s face brightened at Tom’s confident tone. “He’ll be all right now,” he assured himself with a breath of relief, and he ran up to first and stood there, eager, alert, and confident.

And Sales was as steady as clockwork, but the first

man up was the best batter on the other side. He hit the ball again and again, till six fouls had been called; then he made a safe hit and danced derisively on the bag while his successor was hurrying to the plate.

"O Shucks!" Dan muttered under his breath, when that one too made a safe hit, advancing the first to second. Dan gazed anxiously across at Tom. Was he getting rattled after all? But Tom gave him a reassuring nod, and Dan took heart again. There was a burst of triumph from the Townies, followed by a sudden silence as the next boy faced the pitcher.

Tom paused and looked slowly around the field to be sure that every player was at his post and ready; another quick, confident glance flashed between him and Dan, and then once more he faced the plate. This would be the crucial play, and every boy knew it.

The ball flew from Tom's hand. The boy at the bat hit it squarely, sent it whizzing straight over Tom's head, and giving his bat a reckless fling, dashed towards first, while the two at first and second raced for the next bags.

But Gardiner was at second, and Gardiner was very wide awake just then. As he saw the ball go over Tom's head he sprang into the air — such a leap he had never made before — and caught it on the fly. Warned by the shouts of his party, the boy who had started for third wheeled, and attempted to get back to second, but Gardiner was there before him, and

giving him a swift dab with the ball, sent it instantly to Dan, and Dan captured it just barely in time to put out the other player who was making a desperate effort to get back to first. There was lightning work in that play, and it won the game for the republic, as it deserved to do.

Maybe the citizens did n't shout then! Dan did n't, — it was n't his way, — but he enjoyed the racket of the others; and his face was beaming when the captain of the team ran up to him, and slapping him on the back with a force that made him wince exclaimed:

"Hear 'em yell! Don't that sound good in your ears, Dannie boy? And jest listen to Brother! He's shouted till he's hoarse as a frog, but he keeps on a shoutin' jest the same."

Dan's heart was all aglow with happy triumph. He had helped to make Republic Day glorious, and that was enough for any boy, he thought.

The dejected "Townies" trailed off homeward — throwing back scathing taunts and threats of future vengeance on the diamond, and the jubilant citizens swarmed gaily back to the hotel where a luncheon of crackers and milk was speedily disposed of. All the girls who could secure dishcloths or towels lent a hand in the dish-washing so that the regular kitchen force might the sooner be at liberty to enjoy the holiday.

At two o'clock the Glenville brass band appeared, followed by a fresh train of village boys — and guests



from the nearby villages began to arrive. At three o'clock the special exercises began with music by the band and singing by the republic quartette. Several short, bright speeches followed, with chorus singing by the citizens, sandwiched in between, and then everybody wondered what was coming as Brother arose and announced that a good friend of the republic had sent a gift which he wanted should be presented to the citizens on this occasion. Brother paused, and glanced towards the tall flagstaff on the green. Then everybody else looked at it too, and waited breathlessly while Tom Sales slowly lowered the stars and stripes that had floated there until the colors were faded and the edges frayed into ragged strings.

"It's a new flag! I bet we're goin' to have a new flag!" cried little Tim Collins, his voice shrill with excitement.

"It *is* a flag. A flag! A flag!" the joyous shout ran through the throng as the beautiful new colors were run up and slowly unfolded in the breeze. As they floated out, suddenly Will Anderson sprang up and snatching off his cap began to sing "The Star Spangled Banner" — and the next moment every citizen was standing and every head was bared, as the flag and the song together floated on the warm autumn air.

But Tom Sales still stood by the flagstaff, and as the song ceased he began slowly to raise another banner below Old Glory.

In a silence that was intense the citizens watched. Slowly the banner rose, hanging so closely folded that, until it reached its place below the other, nobody could make out its colors or design. Then the breeze caught it—lifted it—spread it out plain to the eager, watching eyes below, and then rang out a shout that hushed into startled silence the birds that were twittering in the tops of the old oaks overhead.

“Hurrah for Hadley Junior Republic! Hurrah—hurrah—*hurrah!*” and every hat and every handkerchief was waving in the air, and Brother was actually wiping his eyes—but they were glad and grateful tears that he brushed aside that day.

Then from a score of fresh young voices rang out the “Song of the Republic,” and everybody—even to Jack Horner who could n’t sing a bit—joined in the chorus as all watched the beautiful banner floating so proudly below the stars and stripes. It bore a large white star on a field of red, and on a blue shield in one corner the letters H. J. R. in white.

“Ain’t she a beauty!”

“Oh, my, but that’s pretty!”

“Long may she wave!”

“The flag of the Republic forever!”

These and a score of other cries rang out till somebody started “My Country ’tis of Thee,” and all joined in with a will no matter whether they could sing or not. As one boy remarked:

“I can’t sing much, but I can holler as loud’s anybody.”

After that Brother called for three cheers for the friend who gave the flags. The cheers were given with a will, and then the boys took up the cry.

"Speech — speech, Brother! Speech!" and Brother gave them a five-minute talk into which he crowded a deal of fun, with a few deeply earnest words of the sort that a boy — or a girl — cannot easily forget.

There was a moment of reverent silence while a few tender words of prayer were spoken; then with a ringing whoop the crowd broke and scattered, to descend with a rush upon Broadway — everybody who could get hold of one, carrying a chair, and so making sure of a place at one of the tables. The cooks and waitresses, with the assistance of volunteer helpers, began to bring out big plates piled high with sandwiches and others with cake — "Nice cake, too, with lots o' plaster on it," as Timmy Collins cried, ecstatically pirouetting on his tiny crutch — and big saucers full of pink and white ice-cream that made eyes shine and mouths water as the citizens impatiently awaited their turns.

Ah, but that was a feast! To think of ice-cream — not limited to one dishful either, but "all a feller wanted" — if two dishes or even three would satisfy him.

"I could eat some more if it did n't ache my froat so," Jacky Horner said, looking imploringly up into Kitty Hyde's laughing eyes.

"Well, Jacky, I'm sorry if it 'aches your froat'," she answered, gently patting the small dark head,

"but you've had two helps and I guess that's enough for a little boy."

Jacky looked doubtful, then gravely disposed of one more spoonful, and with a regretful sigh, resigned his seat to the boy who had been impatiently waiting for it, and who slipped into it almost before Jacky was out.

"Where's Phil? Say — seen Phil?" Dan questioned one and another as he elbowed his way along the crowded piazza.

Nobody could tell him where Phil was just then, and he pursued his quest until Dora Street pulled him by main force into a vacant seat and held him there until Kitty brought a big dish of cream and set it before him.

"Now you just sit still and eat that, and you can hunt up Phil Boyd afterwards," Dora exclaimed. "I expect he's putting himself outside of just such a dish of ice-cream at some table or other. There is plenty for everybody but I'm going to make sure that you eat yours, Dan Dennis!" and Dan submitted and feasted. As he left the table, Brother laid a kind hand on his shoulder.

"Dan," he said, "I want you to come and help bring out the fireworks and arrange them. I want some of you steady fellows who will be careful and do as you are told. You go and hunt up Will Anderson and" — he ran over half a dozen other names — "and get them all over yonder, so that we can have everything ready as soon as it is dark."

"Yes, sir," Dan answered, and hurried off; but his eyes still searched everywhere for Phil, as he went.

Mr. Green, the "boss" of the printing office, was in charge of the fireworks, and he kept all his young assistants busy until the sunlight had faded and it was dark enough for the display. Even then he wanted Dan and Will to remain, and they staid to set off snakes and pinwheels and flowerpots and Roman candles. It was great fun — Dan enjoyed it all immensely — only he hoped that Phil was with some of the fellows enjoying the show too, and not glowering off somewhere all by himself, as of late he had fallen into the habit of doing.

And when the last big rocket had soared high up in the starlit heavens and descended in a glowing shower of golden rain — then with another great shout the boys all rushed over to the bare hilltop where they had piled up all the old boxes and barrels they could beg or buy, and filled them with old newspapers and shavings liberally daubed with oil and tar. Half a dozen matches were promptly applied in as many places, and soon there was a glorious bonfire blazing up in grand style, lighting up the happy young faces, and throwing weird fantastic shadows across the hilltop, as the girls and boys circled about it. Now somebody would start a gay song and everybody would join in the chorus — then from another direction some other singer would begin, and sometimes two or three airs would meet and mingle in harmonious discord; while the small

boys chased each other in and out among the older ones, their cries and shouts and laughter adding to the merry din.

"Oh, look at the goblins! Look at the goblins!" rang out the shrill voice of a girl as she danced excitedly and pointed into the surrounding darkness. It surely was a blood-curdling sight — a dozen huge round heads with glowing, fiery eyes moving along in mid-air one after the other. An instant's silence — then came a shout of laughter as another girl cried out:

"They're nothing but punkin heads — Jack-o'-lanterns — don't you see the boys under 'em?"

In solemn silence, the train of dusky figures with the glowing gorgon heads marched around and around the group just outside the circle of light, till some of the big boys made a sudden dash and captured two or three of the pumpkins, when the rest of the goblin band took to their heels and with shrieks of laughter vanished in the darkness.

"O dear! it's dying down. Wish't we had some more barrels!" somebody cried then, and Brother, looking at his watch by the flickering light, replied,

"Half past nine, girls and boys — it's time the fire went to sleep, and you too."

Then gathering about him, they stood and quietly watched the dying flames for a while, till at a word from Brother somebody softly began the "Good-night Song," and then, keeping step to the music, they all fell into line and marched back to the green — and Republic Day was over.

Dan, hardly waiting for the good-night chorus, rushed up to Phil's room, hoping now that he had gotten tired and gone to bed. He found the door open, but the room was dark.

"Phil!" he called softly, and again, his voice louder and more anxious, "Phil!"

There was no response, and going across to the bed he felt over it in the darkness. No one was there. Hurriedly he struck a match and lit the lamp. Then on the table he saw a folded slip of paper with "Dan" in big letters on the outside. He read the message with anxious haste.

I know you'll come here to look for me, Dan. Maybe you'll be sorry—I rather think you will—but I'm going off. It's no use for them to hunt for me, for I won't come back. I'm sick of the Junior Republic. Goodby, old fellow—I'll see you again sometime and pay you all I owe you, and its a big lot!

PHIL.

Tell Brother good-by.

The boys were coming up to their rooms with much noise and laughter now, and Dan hurriedly blew out the light. He did n't want any of them to speak to him just then. But he must tell Brother. So in a few minutes he passed quietly out and ran swiftly and silently down the stairs, and across the green,—now dark and lonely—to the yellow cottage, where a light still shone from the office windows.

CHAPTER VII.

A SUDDEN DEPARTURE.

FOR miles around the village the big bonfire on the hill had been visible, and scores of country boys had wished that they had known beforehand, so that they too might have been up on the hilltop with the Junior citizens.

One boy, watching it with gloomy eyes, pictured to himself some of the faces on which that red light was dancing. Brother, with his kind eyes — pretty Rose Snyder and Kitty Hyde — of course they'd be together; Will Anderson, little Tim Collins hippling about on his crutch, Jack Horner — and Dan. Phil's face softened as he thought of Dan — Dan, who, he knew well, would be anxiously searching among the merry crowd for him. Phil dropped wearily down on a rock by the roadside and watched till the flames died slowly out. He was several miles away, but he could almost fancy that he heard the good-night song, and saw the long line of girls and boys straggling down the hillside after Brother. There'd be a dozen of the littlest ones clinging to his hands and hanging to his coat-tails — they always did that on such occasions — and, likely as not, Jack Horner or Timmy

Collins would be perched on his broad shoulder, shouting triumphantly to those behind and below.

Phil had forgotten himself for a moment as he pictured the scene, but now his eyes hardened as, with a long, weary breath, he pulled himself up and walked on. He must get farther away before morning, and already he was so tired. Stumbling along country roads in the darkness was wearisome work to the city boy. He pushed on doggedly, but his thoughts kept wandering back to the republic.

Now they would be marching around the green escorting the girls to their cottages as they always did, and now probably the boys were attending Brother and his wife to their cottage and waiting to sing a "good-night" under the windows; and now—now, maybe Dan was hurrying up to his room where he would find the note. Dear old Dan! He was worth a dozen of the others any time!

Then Phil fell to dreaming—dreaming of that future when he should have made a splendid success out West, and should send for Dan, and help him too, to make his fortune. He was never going to forget Dan—and Grace—But somehow the thought of his sister just then made him wretched; he did n't want to think about her—did n't want to imagine how she would look when she should learn that he had run away from the republic, and plunged into the great wide world—alone.

He walked gloomily on, sometimes stumbling over a stone in the road, again twisting his foot in a rut, for

his shoes were worn and not easy to walk in, and the night was cloudy and starless. Now and then a team plodded slowly by, the driver perhaps dozing, and trusting to the horses to keep the road. Phil would keep up with such wagons as long as he could glad to have even so much of companionship on his lonely way. But he was not used to long tramps over country roads and he soon grew so weary that he could go no farther. Then he turned off into a meadow and crept under the edge of a haymow that loomed big and black in the darkness — and there he stretched out his aching limbs with a long sigh of relief. He had some apples in his pocket. He had been too tired to realize before how hungry he was, but now he ate the fruit with keen relish. Then for a while he lay looking with wide eyes into the darkness and thinking of many things. Somehow in that great silence and loneliness his opinion of Philip Boyd changed as he thought over this last year of his life. Even those months at the republic held much that he would have been glad now to forget — if he could. After a while he heard slow, heavy footsteps, and a huge form loomed up beside him, a yet blacker mass in the surrounding blackness; a moist nose touched his cheek and a whiff of clean, fragrant breath swept over his face, as the heavy footsteps passed slowly by.

“A cow!” Phil thought with a nervous laugh. “If I only knew how to milk her and had a cup or anything — some warm milk would n’t be half bad.

Plain apples are n't extra filling." He laughed again to himself. "I guess, though, that's just what they are — *extra* filling — and I'd prefer a good square meal just now. Expect those chumps at Hadley have fairly stuffed themselves with cake and ice-cream!" he added morosely. Phil was not yet too old to enjoy cake and ice-cream.

He slept at last, and awoke to find the sun shining full in his face, and a man standing over him with a pitchfork in his hand.

"What you doin' here?" the man emphasized his question by a prod with the fork, and his tone was gruff.

Phil started up. "Well, I'm — I'm getting up just now, I guess," he answered, trying to ignore the gruff manner of the other.

"Wal," now, you c'n git up an' git out. I don't allow no tramps, old nor young, on my land — d'ye hear? Git!"

Phil scowled as he stood up and brushed the loose hay from his clothes.

"I guess you don't know whom you're talking to," he retorted, drawing himself up with the haughty air that even the three months at Hadley had not entirely subdued.

"See here now!" The man took a step forward with a threatening look. "None o' your sass to me! You take yourself off my land in a hurry or I'll have ye up for vagrancy."

Without a word, Phil turned and marched off down

the road, his face hot with shame and anger. He — Phil Boyd — warned off as a tramp by an old curmudgeon like that! What would Grace — what would his father — say to that?

He was stiff and lame from his walk the night before, and he was ravenously hungry too. The smoke rising from the kitchen chimney of the farmhouse made him think longingly of a hot breakfast, as he trudged wearily on. He came to an apple orchard with old trees stretching their gnarled limbs out over the roadside. There were windfalls scattered among the tall goldenrod that grew thick beside the stone wall. Phil stopped and filled his pockets with the best of the fruit. Then he walked on, eating as he went. By the roadside too were blackberry bushes that held store of late-ripened berries. These helped out his open air breakfast; and there was almost always a brook to be found — singing softly by the roadside or rippling noisily over the stones and boulders in shady corners of the meadows or through the woods. Phil kept in the woods as much as he could, avoiding the roads lest someone from Hadley might be out in search of him. He had no money, but he had his watch and chain — he had kept them for just this emergency. The watch was a valuable one and he planned to sell it in the first large town he should reach, and with the money, pay his fare to the West. Once in that enchanted region he believed that he should find some opening. *Then* he would show them all what he could do. He dreamed dreams and

painted bright visions of the future as he trudged on. The charm on his watch chain was a tiny compass, and by that he kept the right direction. Sometimes he took to the road — when it was an unfrequented one — but if he saw a carriage coming he would drop down in a clump of bushes or behind a rocky ledge, or slip aside in the woods, if there were any close by. So hour after hour he travelled on, tired, hungry, disheartened, but with never a thought of turning back; for in spite of hunger and weariness there was, about this lonely flitting, a dash of romance and adventure that made it more than endurable.

But the romance faded as night approached and it began to rain, a chill, steady rain with a penetrating northeast wind. Phil turned up the collar of his jacket and buttoned it close to keep the water out of his neck; but even then he shivered as the rain came faster and faster, turning the ruts of the road into long pools of water, and the fine dust into sticky mud that soaked his feet, and caked his worn shoes till they seemed heavy as lead, and as cold.

He plodded on doggedly for there were no woods in sight, nothing but open fields belonging to a farmhouse he had passed a little way back. He almost wished he had swallowed his pride and asked permission to spend the night there, but he glanced down at his wet, dirty clothes and shook his head.

“They would n’t want me, and I don’t wonder,” he said aloud. “I shall know a little how a tramp feels after this.”

Then turning a curve in the rain-swept road he gave a low shout of delight, for half way up the hill-side he saw a barn — old and tumble-down indeed, but it was better than the open fields or the dripping woods. He clambered hastily over the stone wall and hurried up the hill, the water squelching in his wet shoes as he went.

The barn door was gone and the flooring was broken so that Phil had to pick his way carefully to avoid a fall into the basement, and the roof had many holes through which the rain was dripping; but one end of the loft, down near the eaves, was fairly dry, and there was some loose hay scattered about that would make a tolerable bed. Phil counted himself in luck.

“Must have been a house here once,” he said to himself, as he stood in the doorway and looked out through the pouring rain. “There’s the stone foundation and the remains of a garden.”

There were some tall box bushes and a straggling rose bush with long branches swinging in the wind, and in one corner against a tumbled heap of stones was a clump of chrysanthemums, its golden blossoms bending under the pelting rain. A sturdy young maple was growing out of what had once been a cellar, and off at one side were several trees — a half-dead cherry, some gnarled old apple trees with their fruit rotting on the ground, a pear tree and — Phil’s eyes brightened at the sight — a plum tree, glowing purple with its loaded fruit.

"Plums!" Phil dashed out through the rain and gathered his cap full of the ripe, rich fruit. He was sick of apples — but plums! He picked up a few of the pears; they were tough and bitter, however, and he flung them away. But the plums were delicious and he ate till he could eat no more.

By this time it was growing dusky, and the rain beat into the old barn everywhere except in the snug corner up in the loft. So Phil climbed up the rough, shaky ladder and stretched himself out on the hay.

"This is fine!" he said aloud. "If only Dan was along now it would be prime fun."

But Dan was n't along, and the supply of hay was meagre. The bed it made left much to be desired, especially when a fellow's feet were soaking wet and blistered, and his clothes damp, and a sharp east wind creeping and whistling through the yawning cracks all about.

"If I only had some matches now, I'd make a fire and it would be warm and cheerful," Phil said to himself after a while. That was as much as admitting that it was n't exactly cheerful under present circumstances, but, well, the fact is — it was n't. Those plums had tasted so good, but somehow now the thought of them was n't very pleasant — in another hour it was distinctly unpleasant. Poor Phil rolled and tossed and groaned through the endless hours of that wretched night — sick of the very thought of plums or apples. Never — so long as he lived — would he want to see a plum or an apple again; so

he thought as he lay there sick and shivering in the darkness, hearing nothing but the dreary swish, swish of the trees against the barn, and the ceaseless drip, drip of the rain on the rotten boards of the floor, and the moaning or whistling voices of the night wind. Phil thought of home that night — of his father and Grace — as he had not thought of them for many a day. He even thought remorsefully of many things that had happened at the Hadley Republic, and he recalled the little mother's tender care when any of the girls or boys were sick. How quickly she would have found something to stop those awful pains that made him writhe and groan in misery!

"There never *was* such an everlasting night!" he declared over and over again; but daylight came at last — a chill, cheerless daylight it seemed to the boy, exhausted with suffering and sleeplessness. He was too weary to move, but he was easier now, and after a while he slept.

It was afternoon when he was awakened by voices outside. Peering through the cracks he saw two boys picking up plums and eating them.

A wan and weary smile flickered across Phil's face. "I might tell them how those plums served me," he thought, "but I guess 't was because I'd eaten nothing else but plums and apples — and I was so dead tired too!" Wish I had something fit to eat now. Wonder if those chaps would bring me something if I should ask 'em." Then he shook his head.

"I could n't trust 'em. Expect Brother's telegraphed all over by this time and folks will be on the lookout for me."

So he watched the boys silently, but made no sign. The rain was over now and the sun was shining. At last, having gorged themselves with the fruit, the boys wandered into the barn, daring each other to jump down into the gloomy basement where the mud and water had formed slimy puddles. Peering down at them through the cracks, Phil accidentally displaced a loose board that fell with a clatter to the floor below.

One of the boys gave a startled cry, and both of them scrambled hastily out of the barn; but as all was quiet, after a few minutes they ventured back, and Phil heard them arguing in the doorway.

"I don't b'lieve there's anybody up there. 'T was jest one o' them old rotten boards tumbled down itself," declared one, stoutly, while both gazed up, but lingered near the doorway, ready for instant flight.

"Mebbe a hen's stole a nest up there," the other suggested.

"Well, you must be a fool, Jim Sparks!" cried the first. "Where'd a hen come from way off here, I'd like to know."

"I don't care," — Jim's voice was sulky now, — "I heard suthin' move up there."

"You did n't either!"

"I did too!"

"Say, Jim, dare ye climb up in that loft?"

"Oh, yes, you dare me, 'cause you dassen't do it your own self, Phil Scott!"

"I dassen't, hey? I don't take a dare from you nor any other feller."

With that, Phil Scott stamped noisily across the shaking boards of the floor, and began slowly to climb the rickety ladder that led to the loft.

The other Phil lay still, hoping that he might escape unseen in his shadowy corner; but the sharp eyes under the ragged straw hat quickly discovered him. There was a moment of utter silence while the two Phils gazed steadily into each other's eyes — the one on the ladder ready to risk life and limb by jumping had the other made a motion towards him.

"What ye lookin' at? Anything up there?" called the boy below, impatiently.

"Guess so," the other answered, without looking down; then, convinced that the white face gazing at him from the dark corner was that of a boy not so very much older or bigger than himself, he suddenly demanded, sharply, "Say, you — what ye doin' up there?"

"I'm — I've been sick," returned Phil.

"Well, you look like it." The other Phil went up one more step. "How long you been here?"

"Only since last night. I got caught on the road in the rain, and I was tired out and could n't go any further, so I stopped here."

"What's the matter with ye — anythin' ketchin'?" the boy demanded suspiciously.

"Nothing but plums. Mebbe you'll have it too; guess you swallowed about as many as I did."

The boy on the ladder now condescended to glance at his curious companion listening impatiently down below.

"Come on up, Jim — it's only a boy," he called.

Then he clambered up into the loft and a moment later Jim's round face appeared at the top of the ladder. He listened silently while his companion questioned Phil.

"Where'd ye come from?" he began with eager curiosity.

"From back in the country a few miles," Phil answered evasively. Then anxious to prevent further questioning, he added, "Look here, can't you fellows get me some crackers or bread and butter or something? I don't want any more plums to-day, and I must get on. I've a long way to travel."

"Where you bound?"

Phil named the town where he hoped to sell his watch. The boy whistled.

"Guess you'll be footsore 'fore you get there if you're goin' to walk all the way. Why don't you take the cars?"

"Got no money," Phil answered briefly. He was weak and faint for want of food, after his night of suffering. "Where do you live — how far off?" he questioned in his turn.

"Jes' down the road a bit — 'bout quarter've a mile."

"Well, will you bring me something to eat or won't you?" Phil demanded shortly. It was the first time in his life that he had ever had to ask for food, and weak as he was his face flushed with the mortification of it.

"Oh, I guess mebbe we will. What d'ye say, Jim?"

Jim nodded in silence, his round eyes still fixed curiously on the strange pale face in the dusky corner.

"Back down there, then!" the other commanded, but Phil called, "Wait a minute."

"Well — what?"

"I wish — I wish you wouldn't say anything to anybody about me," Phil hesitated. "I don't want a lot of folks coming here to ask me a raft of questions. You fellows can keep dark, can't ye? You can — your name's the same as mine."

"What — Phil?" said the other eagerly.

Phil nodded, but the next instant regretted his imprudence. What a fool he had been to tell his name when, of course, they would be searching for him. But it was too late now for regrets.

"What's your other name?" the boy was asking. "Phil Lorimer," which was true, but not all the truth, Lorimer being his middle name.

"Mine's Scott," volunteered Phil number two. "Well, we'll be back in a jiffy. Down with ye, Jim!" and the two clattered noisily down the ladder.

Through a crack Phil watched them as they walked off, their heads together in earnest talk.

"Expect they 'll go and blab," he muttered, trying vainly to get his aching body into a comfortable attitude on his hard resting place. Presently he pulled himself up and walked slowly across the loft, and to his intense disgust found himself weak and trembling.

"Might's well be a baby and done with it!" he exclaimed fretfully, as he dropped again in a limp heap on the shaking boards.

It seemed an endless time before he heard the footsteps and voices of the boys returning. He looked out anxiously and drew a breath of relief as he saw that there was no one with them. They scrambled hastily up the ladder, half expecting that the strange boy would be gone from the shadowy loft.

"We got some!" cried Phil Scott, and, diving into his pockets, he brought out two thick slices of bread liberally spread with butter. At sight of it, Phil's appetite suddenly deserted him. He was exhausted by the long hours of illness, and the smell of the butter sickened him, but he smiled up at his namesake.

"Thank you—I'm ever so much obliged," he said.

"An' Jim—he's got some crackers. Fish 'em out, Jim!" whereupon Jim plunged his brown hands deep in his trousers pockets and brought forth half a dozen crackers of the sort called in New England pearlash crackers.

"That's good — I won't forget you fellows," Phil said gratefully. "What's the name of the nearest post-office — the one where your folks get their mail?"

"It's — it's Perryville, aint it, Phil?" Jim's response was somewhat doubtful, and he looked to his friend for confirmation. Evidently Jim's family made small use of the mail.

Phil Scott nodded. "Course it's Perryville — any chump would know that," he said contemptuously — then to the other Phil, "How long you goin' to stay here?"

A quick flash of suspicion leaped into Phil's eyes, and he hesitated a moment before he answered evasively: "Guess I shan't feel much like travelling for a day or two. I was pretty sick last night."

Jim's mouth widened in a sudden grin. "I got sick once't eatin' some o' them plums," he volunteered. "Thought the inside o' me was all tied in hard knots."

Phil smiled. "Yes, that's about the way I felt."

"Say, ain't it awful still here in the night?" Jim's round, white-lashed blue eyes wandered furtively to the dusky corners as he asked the question.

"Rather," returned Phil, wearily.

"I'd like it!" the other boy broke in. "It's like the places where runaways sleep — in story books." He eyed Phil with sudden suspicion suggested by his own words. "Look here — *be* you one of o' them runaways?" he demanded.

Phil summoned all his dignity as he felt the blood rushing to his face; his voice rang sharp as he answered:

"What you talking about? Do I look like a runaway?"

The other Phil tipped his head sidewise and gazed at him doubtfully. Privately he thought that the stranger did look very much like his conception of a story-book runaway, but he didn't exactly care to risk giving him offence by saying so. There was a spice of mystery and daring adventure about this affair that was highly pleasing to Phil Scott.

So he mumbled, "N — no; 'course not"; then he turned suddenly upon his friend, "I say, you Jim Sparks, stop treadin' on my toes!" he cried out sharply.

"Never touched yer old toes!" retorted Jim, indignantly.

"Well, see 't you don't, then!" Scott's tone was lofty. He was two years older than Jim and ruled him with a rod of iron.

The two hung around for half an hour longer, and then reluctantly parted, promising to return in the morning "with some more grub."

Phil breathed more freely when they were gone, for though their companionship had made the time pass less draggingly, he was afraid to have them linger too long lest they bring upon him some one who might suspect from whence he had come, and perhaps send him back. He nibbled a cracker, but

he had no appetite, and he was choked with thirst. So he crept slowly down the ladder and dragged himself over to a brook that flowed through a meadow close by. When he had bathed his head and hands in the clear, cold water he felt better, and could eat some more crackers.

"I hate to sleep another night in that dreary old hole," he said to himself as he looked back at the barn; "but I suppose it's better than crawling under a bush." He staid where he was, however, until the golden sunset colors had faded slowly from the western sky; then he walked back over the dewy grass and climbed up once more to his uninviting bed chamber. "Guess I can stand it one more night," he told himself with a weary sigh.

He slept heavily, but in the middle of the night he started suddenly wide awake, a strange, horrible sound ringing in his ears.

"Who-who-who-o-o!" The long-drawn, dismal, groaning cry made his flesh creep. He sat motionless, hardly daring to breathe, listening to a low rustling sound over his head, and waiting with tense nerves for a repetition of that strange cry.

Again it rang out, this time directly over his head. Then Phil dropped back on the hay with a quick laugh of relief.

"Well, I *am* a fool to be scared at an owl!" he said scornfully to himself, "but it certainly did sound mighty queer when it woke me out of a sleep so. Get out, you beggar, and let a fellow rest!" he

shouted. There was a quick whir of wings, and all was still.

"Guess I scared you that time, and so we're even," and with that thought Phil settled himself for another nap.

It was yet very early when he woke again feeling much better and stronger. A wash in the brook refreshed him so much that he could even attack the bread and butter with a good appetite, and having so breakfasted, he set off. He did not mean to be there when the two boys returned, and he avoided the road, lest he meet them and have to answer more questions. So as soon as he came to some woods he turned into them for a mile or more. A long, weary day that was to Phil, and when towards sunset he came in sight of a small village, he wished with all his heart that he could rest for the night in one of the comfortable looking little cottages on the elm-shaded street. He had stopped for a drink at a watering trough by the roadside. As he drank, his eye caught a silvery gleam in the bottom of the log trough, and pulling up his sleeves he plunged his arm into the clear, cold water. Yes, it was true — he was in luck this time — it was really a silver dime that he had fished up from the bottom of the trough. He wondered who had dropped it there, but he did not stop to wonder long. The thought crossed his mind that it was queer for him — Philip Boyd — to rejoice so over the finding of ten cents, when a few months before he would not have thought of baring his arm to fish it up out of the

water. But now that dime meant for him a supper in one of those houses, and with new strength he hurried towards the village. At the first house he came to he asked for ten cents' worth of bread and milk, and never in his life before had any food tasted so delicious to Phil Boyd as that warm milk and fresh bread tasted that night. The woman of the house watched him as he ate, and questioned him curiously, but he told her little, and was in haste to be gone when his meal was ended.

"I guess not. Folks round here don't take money for a dish of bread and milk," the woman protested, when Phil offered her his solitary dime, but he left it on the table and was gone, while she stood looking after him with many questions in her eyes.

The next day, too, was a hard one for the boy, but he pushed on, knowing that he was approaching the town where he hoped that this wearisome tramp would end. It was the middle of the afternoon when he reached the place; but now he became painfully conscious of his shabby and disreputable appearance, so much more noticeable here than on the lonely country roads, or in the small villages through which he had passed. When a policeman eyed him sharply, Phil felt his face redden, and he could not help walking a little faster; but the next moment, acting on a sudden impulse, he turned back and faced the officer.

"I want to find a jeweller—an honest one," he said. "Can you direct me to one?"

The man looked him over doubtfully. With his

broken, mud-stained shoes and shabby clothing he certainly did not look like a boy who would want to purchase anything in a jeweller's shop. Then he must have something to sell, so the policeman reasoned, and a boy like that, with valuables to sell, it undoubtedly looked suspicious.

"A jeweller? Yes; there's one jest round the corner. Come along and I'll show you," he said, and laid his hand carelessly on the boy's shoulder.

Phil impatiently shook off the official grasp, then, with an apologetic tone, he said, "I'm pretty tired and your hand's heavy."

The man grinned. "Prob'ly 't is rayther heavy," he admitted. "Here's the place."

He pushed open the door and motioned Phil in, then followed, himself.

"Mr. Shelton, this here young man's a-lookin' for an honest jeweller, so I brought him to you." Over Phil's head he winked at the jeweller as he spoke, and then stepped aside to await the result, with the air of one on duty.

Phil wasted no time. "I want to sell my watch and chain. What will you give me for them?" he said, drawing them from his pocket as he spoke.

The jeweller had looked at the boy with keen, inquiring eyes; now he took up the watch and examined it carefully. Suddenly he spoke sternly:

"Where'd you get this watch, young man?"

The suspicious words and manner stirred the boy to quick anger. He threw back his head with the

old imperious gesture that had not been common with him of late. "My father gave it to me on my last birthday. There's the name and date inside the case," he returned haughtily.

"You don't look exactly like a boy whose father could give him such a birthday gift." The jeweller's tone was sarcastic. "Where does your father live?"

Phil hesitated, and that instant of hesitation was fatal to him so far as the jeweller's faith in his story was concerned. But he gave his father's name and address, and the man made a memorandum of them.

"I shall have to write to this address and make inquiries," he said. "I'm not saying that it is n't all right, but rich men's sons don't usually go off on the tramp and offer their gold watches for sale. If you want to leave this here I'll give you a receipt for it, and lock it up in my safe; and you can come in, say, Thursday. I ought to get an answer before that if it's all straight."

Phil's face was the picture of misery as he stood silently thinking over the situation. He might take the watch away, but what would be the use? Any other jeweller would probably take the same course, he reasoned. Very likely this would bring his father here after him; but suddenly all Phil's courage seemed to desert him. He was so tired, and what was he to do—how was he to get food with not a penny in his pocket?

"I'll come in again Thursday, but you'll find it's right," he said to the man, all his anger and pride

swallowed up in this great disappointment. He turned drearily away and left the store.

"Look here — where are you going?" The policeman stopped him as he would have walked on.

Phil gazed at him hopelessly. "I don't know," he confessed. "That's my watch all right enough, and if I could have raised money on it I should have taken the train for the West to-night. Now I don't know what to do."

"No money, eh?"

The boy shook his head. For the moment he did not much care what became of him.

"Don't see, then, but what you'll have to come along with me," said the officer, his tone not unkindly; for there was no mistaking the misery in the boy's face.

Phil gave him a quick, startled glance. "Come where?" he asked.

"Station house. It's vagrancy, you know — you say you've got no money."

"Vagrancy" again. Phil's face flushed hotly. "That ain't right!" he protested. "If I've no money that watch is mine, and that's as good as money. You've no right to arrest me for vagrancy as if I had no money."

The officer tipped his helmet and scratched his head doubtfully. He was a young man, new to the force and its many-sided problems; and he felt sorry for this boy whose language showed that he was no common tramp even though he did look

rather like one. Doubtless he had run away, and perhaps it was all right about the watch, but — a solution of the difficulty occurred to him.

“Look here — they’ve started a woodyard down ’t the other end of the town where anybody can get a square meal if he ’ll split wood. You can go there if you want to.”

He waited expectantly. Phil’s hesitation was brief. If he must choose between woodyard and station house, of course it had to be the former.

“Where is the place?” he asked sullenly.

The officer grinned comprehendingly. “Ain’t fond o’ hard labor, eh?” he said with a good-natured wink. “Wal’, it’s better’n our shop anyhow, for a youngster like you. Come on, then.”

Half an hour later, Phil was working as he never had worked before in his life. When his task was done, his back was aching and his hands were blistered, but in spite of all that there was a little glow of satisfaction in his heart — a budding self-respect which he had never felt in those three idle months at Hadley. So he earned his bed and board until Thursday.

When he presented himself again at the jeweller’s, the man gave him a queer look.

“Take a seat,” he said; “I’ll attend to you in a moment. John, send that order to No. 37.”

Phil thought that the clerk also gave him a peculiar glance as he stepped to the telephone and gave an order. The jeweller went to his safe and brought out

the watch and chain. "How much did you expect to get for this?" he inquired deliberately.

"I don't know. It cost over a hundred," Phil answered.

"Yes; it's a fine watch. Good time-keeper, isn't it?"

"Prime. How much will you give me for it?" Phil was impatient to be gone.

The jeweller carefully wiped a speck of dust from the crystal.

"Well, I don't know," he began slowly. "You see, the name being on it makes it less easy to sell. Anybody who could afford a watch like this would n't want somebody else's name in it."

"Oh, well, cut it short. Tell me what you will give and be done with it!" Phil's patience was almost exhausted now. It seemed to him that the man was trying to be as slow as he could.

In a moment the door opened and the blue-coated officer, whom Phil had accosted that first day, came in.

"Hello!" he said, with a friendly nod towards the boy. Then to the jeweller, "Got an answer from the boss?"

"Yes." The jeweller reached over to his desk and picked up a yellow paper. "Got this yesterday."

He handed the telegram to Phil. It read:

The watch belongs to my son. Send boy to Hadley Junior Republic. Expenses paid there.

PHILIP BOYD.

Phil stood and stared at the yellow paper. What a fool he had been, he was thinking, not to know that this was just what his father would do.

The young policeman laid his hand on the boy's shoulder and spoke with a touch of sympathy.

"You've got too much sense to make a fuss, I reckon. The train for Hadley goes in about an hour an' we'd better be movin'."

"Here's your watch," the jeweller said, as Phil, with a dejected air, rose and turned away. "I can let you have money on it if you want it, you know."

"No, I don't care now." Phil's voice was heavy and dull as he took the watch, slipped it mechanically into his pocket, and followed the policeman from the shop. At the door another blue-coated figure was waiting, and to him the first officer confided the boy.

"You're to go all the way with him, eh, Tom?" he questioned.

The other man nodded.

"Well, good-by, then, young man. Keep a stiff upper lip an' you'll come out all right." So the good-natured officer tried to cheer the boy as the latter turned, with his guard, in the direction of the railway station.

That was a dismal journey to Philip Boyd. Hour after hour he sat gazing gloomily out of the car window trying not to think about what was to come. He could have wished the journey endless. Anything was better than going back to Hadley — to the old dreary round of idle, aimless days. Once he recalled

that pleasant glow of self-respect that had warmed his heart at the woodyard, but he recalled too his aching back and blistered hands, and shrank from the thought of a life of such labor. No, he would go back, since it must be, but nobody could — nobody should — force him to become a common laborer like — like Dan and the rest. The thought of Dan lightened a little the dismal outlook. At least Dan was there at Hadley, and as his heart warmed at the thought of Dan's plain, honest face, Phil realized for the first time how much this true friend was to him.

And the very first face on which his glance fell as he stepped from the train was Dan's, all a-quiver with gladness at the sight of him, though his words were few and commonplace, just —

"Hello, old chap!" But he wrung Phil's hand with a force that made the joints crack.

It was almost a silent ride up from the station. Dan could not talk before the officer, and Phil was dreading the meeting with Brother and everybody else.

Brother, however, greeted him as kindly as if he had merely been away on a visit, but his eyes were grave as he noted the pallor of the boy's face, and the weary, disheartened expression in his eyes.

"I think, my boy, that a few days in the hospital will be the best thing for you just now; what do you say?" he suggested.

"Oh, yes; let me get a rest there — first!" the boy answered quickly and gratefully.

So, straight to the hospital he went, and after a warm bath, the little mother ordered him to bed, though it was but an hour after sunset. Presently she came to him with a bowl of hot lamb broth and some fresh crackers, set forth daintily on a tray.

"It will rest you and make you sleep," the gentle voice murmured in his ear, and when the nourishing food had been eaten, the little mother sat by his bedside, her cool fingers passing lightly back and forth over his forehead till sleep caught him unaware.

But Dan lay long awake that night, thinking sorrowfully of what must follow for poor Phil after those restful hospital days.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRACE.

THE next morning Dan came in to see Phil, his face full of excitement.

"Did you hear what happened last night?" he inquired eagerly.

"No — what?" Phil's tone was languid and indifferent. He felt very little interest in public happenings this morning. But Dan had interest enough for two, and he needed no urging to induce him to tell the story.

"The bank was robbed," he began. "Somebody broke into it and stole a pile — two or three hundred dollars, they say."

"Real money?" Phil began to be interested now.

"No, republic money. It must have been one of the citizens, of course — 'cause our money would n't do anybody else any good; and that ain't all. He went through two of the rooms some time yesterday — stole a pocketbook from Tom Sales and a lot of cash from Reub Baum."

"I don't care for that — I'm glad of it." Phil's tone was hard. He had not forgotten how Baum had served him.

"I guess there ain't anybody sorry 'bout Reub," Dan went on. "He's put the screws on too tight whenever he's had the chance. He don't get no sympathy, but we're all sorry for Sales. He's a real good fellow — Tom is."

"Do they think that the same one did it all?" Phil questioned with languid interest.

"Oh, yes, I guess everybody thinks so. Some o' the other fellows say that the thief was in their rooms, but did n't get any cash — only hunted through their trunks and things."

"What's to be done about it?"

"Oh, the detectives are at work already. They say they're sure to catch the thief 'cause, with all that cash, he'll likely jest lay 'round and take life easy as soon as he thinks it's safe to."

"Yes, I suppose so," Phil assented. Then he looked earnestly into his friend's face. "Dan, I suppose they'll stick me in jail as soon as I leave the hospital?"

"I'm 'fraid so, Phil." There was infinite pity and sympathy in the plain face as Dan made answer.

Phil was still in bed. He flung out his arms with an impatient gesture.

"Oh, well, who cares!" he said. "As well be there as any place if I've got to stay 'round here."

Dan's eyes were full of pleading that he knew it was useless to utter. "Oh, *why* won't he do some kind of work!" he was saying in his heart, and Phil knew as well as if he had spoken, what his thoughts were.

"How long do you suppose they'll keep me there, Dan?"

For an instant Dan hesitated; then he answered slowly, his anxious eyes on the other's face:

"Oh, not so very long. You know they'll let you out pretty quick on parole."

"I won't agree to that!" Phil flashed out, and Dan sighed as he saw the obstinate set of Phil's mouth.

"Then I'm 'fraid you'll get six months," he said. "If you'd only give your word and — go to work, you know — I'd get some of the fellers to go bail for you; I could, I'm sure, Phil." Dan's voice was full of earnest persuasion, but it was not hopeful. How could it be, with his eyes on Phil's face?

"They can keep me in jail for a year — 't won't make any difference. If father'd let me go home, maybe I'd go to work — somewhere — I won't promise, though — but I'll *never* give in now and work here!" So Phil declared, with an emphasis that left no room for hope on Dan's part.

He rose, a sorrowful look in his eyes.

"I'm sorry — I'm awful sorry, Phil. I've got to go now, but I'll be in again after supper."

"You need n't unless you like," the other called after him gruffly, as he turned his face to the wall.

"But I do want to — you know I do, Phil," Dan paused to answer before he hurried away to roll-call.

For three days Phil enjoyed the restful quiet of the hospital, and the kindly care of the little mother who

never once referred to his running away, or asked a question that he might not like to answer. Dan came twice every day to see him, and Brother was in each evening. On the third day as he was going away, Phil asked abruptly:

"When am I to have my trial?"

"As soon as you feel well enough to go to court," Brother replied.

"That's now," Phil answered, "but a trial's all nonsense. Everybody knows that I cleared out."

"Yes," Brother returned pleasantly, "but you know we like to do things in the right way here, and we do not think that it would be right to put a citizen in jail without a trial."

"I'll plead guilty then, and let that end it," Phil said, his tone hard and sullen.

And so he did; desiring only to stand as short a time as might be in the prisoner's dock, a target for curious eyes, he did all that he could to shorten the trial. He was disheartened, almost desperate, and anxious only to get out of the sight of everybody, as he told Dan.

The sentence was three months on the gang, and now Phil must either work or spend his days and nights in a narrow cell. Which would he do? Dan wondered anxiously. It made his faithful heart ache to see his friend wearing the prison dress of brown and white stripes, "just like they wear on the Island," he said mournfully to himself.

What Phil felt about that, nobody knew but him-

self. When they took him out with the gang to dig ditches for draining, he stood idly by, saying nothing, but he would not use the pick or shovel that was thrust into his hands. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to keep him in solitary confinement until he should be willing to work; so, day after day, he lay or sat on his narrow cot, or stood at the little barred window, moodily watching whatever he could see from there. Dan spent always a part of the evening with him, but he refused to see any of the other boys; and when Brother came, Phil maintained mostly a sullen silence. Only to Dan did he open his heart and show the obstinate determination that had taken such firm possession of him.

"They can't make me work," he declared over and over again. "If they keep me shut up here long I shall get sick, and then they'll *have* to let me out. I guess I can keep it up as long as they can!"

"They," to Phil, meant his father and Brother. His father's letters he had long since ceased to answer, and even to Grace he had not written since his return, though twice every week she wrote him a letter full of loving thought for him, and anxious pleading for some word from him.

When Phil had been in jail for two weeks the confinement, added to the effects of his hard experience as a runaway, had begun to tell upon him. He looked thin and pale and miserable, with his curly hair cropped close, prison fashion, and his striped clothes hanging loosely upon him. One

evening he was sitting on his cot, his face hidden in his hands, wondering drearily why Dan did not come. It was after seven. Probably he was getting sick of coming. Well, it was no wonder. He admitted to himself that Dan had been mighty good about coming. He knew that he never would have done half as much for Dan if the case had been reversed. Anyhow it did n't make much difference. He could stay away forever if he liked. Suddenly Phil lifted his head. He heard the keeper coming along the corridor. He knew that heavy shuffling step—he had listened to it times enough to know it—but who else was coming? Not Dan—that other step was far lighter than Dan's. It sounded like a girl. If they *dared* to bring any of those girls to his cell—the keeper was unlocking his door, and Phil looked up, scowling savagely.

"You need n't bring anybody here!" he cried out harshly. "Did n't I tell you I would n't see *anybody* but just Dan Dennis and Brother?"

The keeper, saying nothing, glanced back in a clumsy, uncertain way at somebody outside whom Phil could not see. Then that somebody hastily motioned the keeper aside and, as he stepped back, glided swiftly past him, and the next moment had her arms about Phil's neck, giving him no chance to speak. The keeper shut the door and vanished.

"O Phil, *Phil!*" the girl cried, trying bravely to keep back the tears at sight of Phil—like this!

He looked up at her, fairly dazed by the unexpectedness of it.

"Grace — you here!" he cried out with a quick catch in his breath; and then suddenly a sense of the shame and misery of it all swept over him like a flood, and pulling roughly away from her clinging arms he flung himself face down on the cot and sobbed like a child.

Grace dropped on her knees beside him, her tears mingling with his. It was all so dreadful. Her handsome brother here in jail, with cropped hair and prison clothes, like any convict, and crying like a girl! Grace had not seen him cry before since he was a little bit of a fellow. She wiped his tears away with her fresh, dainty handkerchief, and whispered all sorts of loving words in his ears.

At last he sat up and faced her, and as she saw the dark, sullen expression in his eyes, she shivered and almost wished he would break down again, he looked so hard and bitter now.

"Well," he said coldly, "you must think I'm a baby — or a fool. How came you here anyhow, Grace? Did father come with you?"

"No, I came in charge of a friend of his who was going on further. She looked at him wistfully as she added, "Father wanted to come, Phil, but he — he thought maybe you would n't care to see him."

"I would n't." Phil's response was prompt and hard.

"And as for me, Phil, I've come here to stay as long as you stay."

Phil stared at her. "Why, you can't," he said.

"I mean you can't stay unless you pitch in and work like the rest of 'em — or else keep me company here in jail." His tone was bitter. "Of course you know that I ran away and got brought back — thanks to father!"

"Yes, Phil"; her hand crept into his.

"Well, do you mean that you're fool enough to come here and work for your living when you need n't to?"

"Just fool enough for that, dear," she answered softly.

"Well, I must say!"

What Phil must say, however, he left unsaid, but involuntarily his fingers tightened around hers. She went on in the same low, tender voice:

"Phil, if I did n't know before, I found out after you left, how much I — care for you. The house was so still and lonesome, and father — O Phil, you can't begin to know how much father misses you. I've tried to make up to him as much as I could, but I'm only a girl. I can never be as much to him as you could be, Phil."

Phil sat in frowning silence as his sister talked on, turning now from home topics to other things — anything that might interest him and banish that hard, bitter look that was so strangely unfamiliar to her on her brother's face. When curfew rang, and the keeper returned and unlocked the door, and Grace had said good-night and gone reluctantly away, Phil sat for a long, long time staring with unseeing eyes at

the stars that glimmered through the thinning foliage of the elms on the green. The boy was fighting a desperate battle with himself that night, and the conflict was not ended when, worn and weary in mind and body, he at last threw himself on his hard bed and slept.

As Grace left the prison, Dan stepped out of the shadows and joined her. He was the only one of the citizens — except the keeper of the jail — whom she had met, but she had asked to see Dan, having gathered from Phil's letters some idea of what he had been to her brother. And when she had taken his rough, coarse hand in hers, and looked into his honest eyes, — her own shining with trust and gratitude, — well, something strange and beautiful happened to Dan then. He had n't the faintest idea what it was, only — he had never in his life before even spoken to such a girl as this, or had anyone give him such a look as Grace gave him while she uttered those few earnest words of gratitude, and, well:

"I guess if that girl wanted to use me for a door mat, I'd let her, an' that's all there is about it!" So the boy summed up his feelings to himself while he waited outside the jail during Grace's interview with Phil, that he might walk with her afterwards over to Brother's cottage, for Grace was the little mother's guest that night. The little mother indeed would gladly have kept the girl with her as long as she might choose to stay at the republic, but Grace

had come for a purpose, and the very next day she began to carry it out.

"It's so kind of you to ask me to stay here, and of course it would be ever so much easier and pleasanter," she said, "but you know I came here just for Phil, and I am sure I can help him more if I live exactly as the others do"; and the little mother knew that the girl was right. So the next morning she went with her all over the small republic, explaining everything, and introducing to her the officials and many of the girls. Grace looked and listened with an ever-deepening interest. She had been interested in the place before because Phil was there, but a new and different interest grew within her, as she saw with her own eyes what was being done here for these girls and boys in the way of character-building. Grace had always been a thoughtful girl, and of late the trouble and anxiety about her twin brother had made her far more so.

By special permission she was allowed to spend that next afternoon with Phil. Seeing him by daylight she realized yet more keenly how sadly he had deteriorated in body and mind.

"It has not done him a bit of good to be here," she said to herself. "Oh, I must find some way to help him — I *must!*" And that thought of helping him was constantly in her mind all the time that she remained with him. At home, he had often been careless, idle, and indifferent, but never hard and bitter and reckless as he was now. Grace wondered

sadly if it had all been a mistake — a failure — sending Phil here and coming now herself.

"But it must n't be — it shan't be a failure!" she told herself. She would not allow herself to think of such a thing as failure. So she chatted with Phil as brightly as she could, trying to avoid all unpleasant topics. At last he asked abruptly:

"What are you going to do here, Grace? You said you were going to work." He spoke with a half sneer as he glanced at his sister's pretty white hands that, he knew, had never done hard work of any sort.

She smiled brightly into his gloomy face.

"I'm going to be a waiter girl, sir, and when you come back to the Grand Hotel I'll wait on you so beautifully that you'll be tempted to tip me."

"Grace! *You* to wait on that rough, noisy crowd! What *makes* you do it?" he exclaimed angrily

She leaned towards him and spoke softly, "Because I love my brother."

"What's that got to do with it?" he flung out roughly.

She went on quietly, ignoring his question, "And, Phil, that is n't all. That, of course, was what brought me here, but this morning I went all over the place with the little mother, and I never in my life was more interested in anything. She told me about some of the girls and boys; what they were when they came here and how the self-government had changed and developed them. It seems wonderful to me, and,

Phil — I've never done any real good in the world," — her voice fell and faltered for a moment, "but it came to me, as I saw some of those rough-looking, noisy girls, that maybe I could help them — a little — and I'd like so much to try."

"Help 'em! How?" Phil's tone was anything but sympathetic. "They aren't your kind of girls anyhow. Some of them are horrid — not fit for you to speak to."

"That's just it. Maybe I can help them somehow, so they won't be quite so horrid, as you say. Mrs. Carter says that many of them come from the very poorest families, and have never had a chance to learn anything good till they came here. Think what I'd be, Phil, if it had been so with me. I don't believe I should have been a bit better than they are."

"Pshaw! You would too!" Phil retorted in quick indignation.

Grace shook her head. Then, with a decided little nod, she added:

"You'll see, Mr. Phil, how I'll get those girls in training. I can do it — I'm sure I can."

Phil looked at her with doubtful wonder, mentally contrasting her with the rough, careless crowd that made up the bulk of the citizenship at Hadley. Grace was not as pretty as Rose Synder, but there was about her a peculiar fineness, an exquisite daintiness, that was the greatest possible contrast to most of these other girls.

"Humph! They'll hate her or go wild over her

—remains to be seen, which," Phil told himself, with quite unusual insight, for him. He concluded that he would rather like to watch the experiment, but the interest died out of his eyes as he remembered that he was a prisoner.

"She'll get sick of it all in a little while — that noisy dining-room and the kitchen smells and all," he said to himself,

And indeed Grace found the reality much more trying than she had foreseen when, the next morning, she made her first appearance in the dining-room of the Grand. She had put on her plainest dress, — a blue serge, very simply made, — but the cut and fit of it gave it an air that the other girls recognized at once as "stylish." She had put on also the only apron that she had brought with her, — one of finest white lawn, elaborately tucked and ruffled.

"*You* ain't fitten for waiter work in them fine clothes!" the head cook remarked, eyeing her with distinct disfavor when she presented herself in the kitchen.

Grace smiled into the red, disapproving face, then glanced down at her dainty apron.

"It's a foolish little affair, I know," she returned, "but I have n't a single good sensible apron with me. Is there any place where I can buy some?"

The other waiter girls nudged each other and giggled as the cook answered shortly:

"Mebbe you can git one at the store. It'll be open at half past four this afternoon."

"I'll go there and try," Grace returned pleasantly. "And now what am I to do first? I'm awfully stupid and ignorant, but I can at least do as I'm told — you'll see."

The cook tossed her head as she mixed the johnny cake. "Jes' do like the rest." She nodded towards the giggling group, then turned on them sharply. "What you all standin' there snickerin' for, like a box o' monkeys? Git about yer work. Them tables ain't all set yet."

"I'll watch, this morning, and see how you do, and then I'll know how next time," Grace said, as she followed the girls to the dining-room. She gave a little shiver as she looked about her. Such a contrast it was to the big, beautiful dining-room at home! A bare floor, heavy wooden chairs, curtainless windows, tables with clean cloths — mostly — but the dishes that the girls were noisily depositing on the tables were of the heaviest coarse white ware, and the knives and forks and spoons — Grace wondered if she would ever be hungry enough to relish a meal at one of those tables.

Outside on Broadway, there was a noisy, merry tumult as the girls and boys gathered there awaiting the summons to breakfast. A great dog, the pet of the republic, was stretched across the piazza, and several small boys were running races, ending with a leap over Duke's shaggy back.

Suddenly a chorus of laughing shrieks and cries came from the kitchen, and looking around, Grace

saw that the waitresses had all disappeared. A big boy stood grinning at the door leading into the kitchen.

"We've locked them all in there," he called to Grace. "Skip Allison's holding the other door. Jest hear 'em yell!"

The girls were calling and battering and pounding on the kitchen side of the door, and now a dozen laughing faces were peering in at the dining-room door and windows.

"Aw, let the girls out, Jim!"

"The oatmeal 'll be cold as a stone."

"An' the coffee too! Open the door, you Jim!"

"If you don't unlock that door, I'll come in there an' punch yer head fer ye — see?"

As this threatening chorus was flung at him, Jim Slocum unlocked the door and made a dive for the opposite one, while the girls, bursting in from the kitchen, ran after him, shrieking and scolding and laughing as they struck at him with hands, aprons, and towels.

Grace stood apart, shrinking from the noisy crowd, and trying not to let her distaste for this rough frolicking show too plainly in her face. But one of the girls pointed at her, and giving the one next her a shove, exclaimed mockingly:

"Tend to yer business, Jen. Can't yer see't her ladyship's shocked at yer unpolite actin'?"

The others stared at Grace and broke into fresh laughter, that ended in a shriek from one, as Jim

Slocum reached a long arm in through a window and yanked the brown braid that hung down her back.

But now Kitty Hyde appeared on Broadway and spoke a word of warning:

"Breakfast won't be on time if you don't leave the waiters alone, boys, and you'll all be late to roll-call. Hurry up, girls, it's time now for the call."

"Well, then, just let those saucy boys mind their own business an' keep out of here till breakfast's on the tables!" retorted the girl whose hair had been pulled.

"The cook's cross as two sticks anyhow, this morning. I think likely she'll scorch the oatmeal on purpose," added another.

"Serve those boys right if she did!" a bright-eyed girl threw back over her shoulder, as she followed the others to the kitchen.

The bugler sounded the summons, and the hungry citizens swarmed into the dining-room and tumbled noisily into their places. The heavy chairs were scraped over the bare floor with ear-splitting sounds, the boy who made the most noise being considered the best fellow, while plates and knives and forks rattled and thumped, and it seemed to Grace that every girl and boy in the room was talking at once.

She caught her breath nervously. Should she be able to endure it, she wondered, as she set the dishes of oatmeal on the table which had been assigned to her, stepping hastily aside as one clumsy boy slopped the milk carelessly over the tablecloth and the floor. But for that, several called him sharply to order.

"Now we'll have to have a dirty tablecloth till Sunday. You're clumsy's a cow, Jack."

"Say, Jack, guess they want you at some other table, don't they?"

Jack laughed and winked familiarly at Grace, quite undisturbed by these remarks, the while he rapidly disposed of his oatmeal.

Grace attended to her duties, trying to shut her eyes and ears to much that went on about her, yet she admitted to herself that the table manners were not bad, considering the homes from which most of these girls and boys had come. That they should be rough and noisy was to be expected, but yet — she foresaw that she set herself no easy task, and she began to feel that perhaps there had been more excuse for Phil than she had thought

It was not easy to eat her own breakfast with the other waitresses afterwards. She tried not to see the coffee stains beside her plate, and the mussiness of the butter dish; and she hoped, by her readiness to pass things to the others, to prevent anyone's observing how little she ate. But Kate Sullivan, a stout, red-cheeked girl who had quite a following among the rougher girls, drew all eyes upon Grace as, leaning forward, she remarked:

"Girls, her ladyship can't stomach our food. Tain't good enough for her, I s'pose."

"My head aches — I'm not hungry this morning," Grace answered quickly. "Do you feel hungry after a long car ride?"

"Me? You better b'lieve I do. I don't have no headaches," Kate replied with an airy toss of her head.

Just then a quiet brown-eyed girl sitting next silently slipped her hand into Grace's under the tablecloth, and smiling back at her, Grace felt her heart lighten.

"There's one I can like, I'm sure," she thought as she returned the pressure.

The waitresses helped also about the dish-washing after each meal, and when this was done Grace found the brown-eyed girl at her side.

"I guess you ain't used to such noisy folks, are you?" she began.

"No," said Grace; "I think that was one thing that made my head ache. But I shall get used to it after a little."

The other girl gave a tired sigh. "I ain't used to it, and I've been here three months," she returned.

"Maybe they'll be quieter after a while," Grace answered cheerfully. "You and I will be two quiet ones anyway. Will you tell me your name, please?"

"Lizzie Burt. Your name is Boyd, I know."

"Yes, Grace Boyd. What do you do now until dinner time?"

"Take care of our rooms and get our lessons. We go to school after dinner, you know. To-morrow we'll have to sweep and dust the dining-room — we do that every other day."

"You wait on the table next to mine, don't you?" Grace asked.

Lizzie nodded. "Yes, and I've got two such careless boys at my table. They're always slopping and spilling things. I think we ought to have fines for such careless ones, don't you?"

"Fines for them—or rewards for the careful ones. Maybe that would be a better plan; what do you think, Lizzie?"

"What kind of rewards?" Lizzie inquired doubtfully.

"I was thinking of the tables. Would n't it be nice if we could have one table with a very fine fresh cloth and pretty dishes and silver, you know, and have the most careful citizens—those with the nicest table manners—sit at that table?"

Lizzie lifted shining eyes to the other girl.

"Oh, I wish we could do that, but we can't, because we've no nice dishes and things for the table," she added, the eager light fading from her eyes.

Grace turned to her with a smile. "Can you keep a secret, Lizzie?"

"Yes." Grace smiled again, well pleased at the tone of quiet certainty.

"I believe you can and will," she said. "Well, then, I know someone who is very much interested in this republic, and who will, I am sure, furnish all that will be needed for such a table."

"Oh, that'll be splendid!" Lizzie's face was fairly beaming now. "That will work ever so much better than fines, I'm sure," she answered.

CHAPTER IX.

A PAIR OF SHOES.

AT half past four that afternoon Grace noticed that many of the girls were hurrying over towards a small building near the printing office. She was wondering what was going on there, when Lizzie ran up to her.

"The store's open. Don't you want to come over? I'm going," she said.

"Yes; I'd like to." As she spoke, Grace slipped her arm through Lizzie's. "Where do the things in the store come from?"

"Anywhere and everywhere," Lizzie answered. "Folks that know about the republic send there anything that they don't want, you know. We all buy our clothes there, 'cept those that have 'em sent from home, an' not many are lucky enough for that."

"And do you always find what you like there?"

Lizzie shrugged her shoulders.

"If we don't, we have to just like what we find," she laughed. "It's the worst about shoes." She stuck out one foot, showing a very ragged specimen of foot-wear. "I've needed a pair of shoes for ever so long, but there ain't been any at the store that I could wear. I hope there will be to-day."

A look of deep pity crept into Grace's eyes. To think of a nice girl like this one having to wear such shoes as that! Grace made an addition to a mental list. Item — plenty of good shoes for girls.

The store was a small place with a counter in front of shelves separated into narrow spaces. These divisions were filled, or partly filled, with second-hand clothing — dresses, aprons, underwear, stockings, for the girls; a few shabby suits for boys, with some faded shirtwaists for the little fellows — a pitifully poor supply, Grace thought, as she stood aside watching the eager faces of the girls as they pulled over the garments in search of what they needed. Her mental list lengthened rapidly.

"Father will send whatever I want, — I know he will," she was thinking, as Lizzie, with a disappointed face, held up a pair of worn, tan bicycle boots.

"There ain't a pair here but these, and I don't want these things, — they'd come most up to my knees," she said, "and there ain't any strings to 'em either!"

"Of course you don't want these old things!" Grace cried impulsively. She looked at Lizzie with meditative eyes. Did she dare? She had so many pairs of shoes, and Lizzie was no larger than she.

"I wonder," she began hesitatingly, then hurried on, "Is there anything you want here except shoes, Lizzie?"

Lizzie looked along the shelves with slow deliberation.

"I need some aprons," she began.

"Oh, so do I. Let us see the aprons, please," Grace said to one of the girls behind the counter. The girl handed out half a dozen aprons of the coarsest calico and gingham.

"Oh, not that kind — we want big white ones," Grace said hastily.

"Ain't got any," was the brief reply, as the girl swept the whole pile back to the shelf.

"You could get the kind you want down to the village, if you 've any United States money, you know," Lizzie reminded Grace as they left the store together.

"So I can. I never thought of that. We'll ask Brother to let us go down there to-morrow. But come on now to my room," Grace answered.

"It's a nice room, yours," Lizzie said rather wistfully, when they reached it. "It's one of the biggest in the cottage, you know."

"Biggest!" Grace had been feeling as if she were cooped up in a bare little closet. "It will be pleasanter when I get out my pictures and books and sofa pillows," she replied, as she began to hunt through one of her trunks. "There," she added, "see if those will fit you." With a gasp of astonishment, Lizzie took the shoes that Grace held out to her; then a look of delight mingled with doubt crept into her eyes. Her hands trembled with eagerness as she slipped off one of her own ragged shoes, kicking it surreptitiously out of sight under her chair as she did so.

"It fits lovely!" she cried, as she hastily buttoned on one shoe. "My! I never had such pretty ones."

"Would you mind — would n't you just as lief — buy these as to buy any at the store?" Grace stammered, her face flushing painfully. She so longed to put them into the girl's hands freely, with no word of payment, but she dared not do that. "Nothing without labor" was the republic motto, as Brother had already warned her — foreseeing, perhaps, what she might be tempted to do.

"Oh, can I? Don't you need 'em? Oh! Oh!" Lizzie snatched up the other shoe and fairly hugged it in her delight. "I'll pay you all the money I've got, and be glad to," she cried, fumbling for her pocket-book.

Grace put out a protesting hand. "O, no, don't!" she cried, feeling the tears burning her eyes; then recollecting herself she added: "Oh, well, if you want to pay for them now — I suppose you can; but mind, I won't take more than a dollar. Is that too much?"

"Too much? No indeed. Why, I should have had to pay that much for them old bicycle boots with no strings." She pulled out a shabby purse and handed out two republic half dollars.

Grace dropped the money hastily on the table, feeling as if it burned her fingers; while Lizzie put on the other shoe and then looked at her feet with the frank admiration of a child.

"I never *did* have such nice-feelin' ones before," she exclaimed with a happy laugh.

"You can fling the old ones away now," Grace said, glancing at the pair Lizzie had taken off. They looked so uncomfortable with their broken sides and run-over heels, that she could not bear to see them. But Lizzie picked them up hastily.

"O, no!" she cried, "I'll have these mended now and keep the new ones for best; I could n't wear these for every day." She stuck out one foot again and gazed at it with simple pride.

Grace looked at her with a world of pity and sympathy in her eyes. To care like that for a pair of comfortable shoes! How little she had known about the lives of other girls — girls like this one! But she would know about them. She would stay here for a while and live just as they did, only — she really *could* not wear shoes like those old ones. She wondered how a girl could walk in them. Then a curious expression flashed into her eyes. She would know that, too.

"Lizzie, when are you going to carry those shoes to be mended?" she asked suddenly.

"In the morning. Why?"

"Then just leave them here until supper time, will you?"

"Why, yes, of course; but what do you want of them?" She stared wonderingly at Grace.

"I just want them a little while. Maybe I'll tell you why, sometime," Grace answered.

After Lizzie had gone, Grace took off her soft kid boots, put on those old broken shoes and walked up and down the room in them. They had been cheap and poorly made in the first place. Now, with the heels worn off on the sides, and one sole flapping loosely, Grace found them instruments of torture.

"How *could* she walk in them!" she cried out, with a half sob. "I'd rather go barefoot. I expect this is the reason that so many of the boys do go barefoot." Many new thoughts were stirring in her heart as she took off those old shoes and laid them aside for their owner.

That evening when she left the prison she had a long talk with Dan — a talk that began and ended with Phil. In spite of Dan's reluctance to blame Phil, and the excuses he found for him, Grace gathered from his answers to her many questions a pretty clear idea of her brother's life at the republic in those past months — gathered too, all unaware to Dan, a fairly clear idea of what he had been to Phil, and her heart went out in warm gratitude to him. Since he knew so much more than she of Phil's affairs, she did not hesitate to talk with him on the subject. At last she inquired if Phil was in debt to anyone.

"No, I guess not," Dan replied slowly. "You know he sold off his clothes and everything."

"Yes, he told me so; and, Dan, he told me, too, that he had borrowed money of you."

"Oh, that's nothin'. 'T war n't much, an' — an' I did n't need it," Dan stammered confusedly.

"And that you paid his board at the Grand while you boarded yourself at that horrid little Caboose," Grace went on.

"O, my! Phil ought n't to a-told you that. That war n't nothin' much," Dan protested, his face red with embarrassment. He wished Phil's sister would n't talk of these things.

But Phil's sister went on, seriously, "And now, Dan, you are going to tell me just how much Phil borrowed of you. We can't ever in this world pay you for all your kindness to him, — money can't pay for that, — but the other I must make right at once."

In the darkness Dan's lips tightened ominously. He was seldom angry, but he was angry now.

"I won't tell you — *never!*" he exclaimed.

To think that this girl should insist on paying back that money! There was a streak of chivalry in poor Dan's untutored heart, and it hurt him sorely that Grace should insist on this. He was only a rough, common boy — he knew that well enough. He could n't hold a candle to Phil, in spite of all that Phil had done, — or not done, — so he thought. He was fond of Phil, too. He had never grudged a cent that he had spent for him, and now to have Phil's sister talk so about it, as if, — as if —

"Good night!" he said suddenly, and was gone.

Grace stopped and gazed in utter amazement into the darkness in which he had so suddenly vanished. Had she said anything to offend him, she wondered anxiously.

"Dan," she called softly, "I want to speak to you, Dan," but only the echo of hasty footsteps came back to her; and as curfew rang out, she went across to her room, determined to make it right with Dan the first thing in the morning. But in the morning Dan kept out of her way, and all that day she could not get a word with him, — nor could anybody else. At the shop, Will Anderson wondered what had come over Dan; he had never before been silent and glum. Even when Grace sent word that she wanted to see him, he would not go to her, — he was too busy, he said. When Grace, much disturbed, spoke to her brother about it, he looked surprised for a moment, then he laughed.

"Dan's a queer chap," he said. "There's an obstinate streak in him and you must have run up against it somehow when you spoke about that money. Let it alone — I'll make it all right with him if ever I get out of this hole!" He ended bitterly, as he often did these days.

Grace still looked troubled. "I would n't have hurt his feelings for anything," she said. "I did n't suppose he'd have any such — such feeling about it."

"He did n't mind lending to me — he liked it," Phil said, throwing back his head half defiantly.

But Grace answered instantly, with a touch of rare sarcasm, "Do you think he *liked* boarding at the Caboose, Phil?"

Phil glanced at her from under scowling brows. "I was a fool to tell you about that!" he muttered;

and then he turned his face away and was silent for a little. Suddenly he looked around and broke out fiercely, "Don't you *hate* it, Grace — working in that dining-room?"

"It isn't easy, or very pleasant," she replied gravely, "but I am going to keep on all the same."

"More fool you!" he flung out roughly, and turned away again.

Two days later Grace found a great bunch of goldenrod hanging to the door-knob of her room, and Lizzie Burt told her that she saw Dan Dennis hang it there. That night, when Dan went to his bare little room, he found a tiny three-cornered note awaiting him.

"Won't you please come and see me this evening?" he read.
"I'll be in the library after supper. . . . G. H. B."

Many times Dan read and reread that note, a look of rare pleasure in his eyes. It was the first such note that he had ever received; and he thought it was so pretty — the thick, creamy white paper with G. H. B. in silver letters at the top, and the faintest little bit of a sweet smell about it — just a shadow of violets. Dan felt that such a note was worth far more than all that he had lent Phil. It somehow made him feel not quite so coarse and rough — just a little bit more "like Phil's sort" — to get it. Dan was not troubled with self-conceit. He went to the library that evening, and Phil's debt was never again mentioned between Grace and himself.

CHAPTER X.

SHACKLES.

ONE morning as he finished his breakfast, Phil was surprised to hear the tramp of feet, many feet, in the corridor. He looked up in sullen inquiry when the keeper unlocked the door, and half a dozen boys entered his cell; or rather, two entered and the others crowded about the door. Without a word, the foremost boy drew some heavy iron shackles from his pocket and, stooping, began to fasten them around Phil's ankles.

"What's that for?" Phil cried out, his face whitening with fierce anger.

The irons locked on, the boy rose and stood looking down on Phil as he sat on his cot. He was the head of the police department, and all those with him were republic officials.

"It means," he answered slowly, "that you've sulked and shirked long enough, Boyd. Now you are going to work on the gang — work out your sentence; do you understand?"

"I won't, I tell ye! I'll *never* do it!" Phil's voice rose to a shriek of angry defiance.

"We'll see about that. Come on!"

"I won't!" repeated Phil, his eyes blazing, "and you can't make me."

"You were never more mistaken in your life, as we'll show you presently. You've had a fair chance — more than a fair chance, 'cause Brother hoped you'd come to your senses and do your duty without bein' forced into it; but he's given you up now, an' promised not to interfere with us, an' we're goin' to *make you work* — d'ye understand? A feller that'll sit an' sulk when his sister's workin' here just to be near him is most too mean to live. That's what we all think, and so — git up!"

Phil set his lips grimly and looked with fiery eyes into the other boy's face. The latter looked over his shoulder and made a gesture, whereupon two big fellows suddenly seized Phil by the arms, lifted him, none too gently, to his feet, and dragged him out of the cell and along the corridor. Hampered by the shackles, his struggles availed nothing.

Outside the prison, the gang in striped clothes like Phil's stood waiting. One wore shackles — all carried picks or shovels. At sight of Phil in the hands of his guards, a grin of satisfaction dawned upon every face in the line. This was as it should be, they felt. Why should Phil Boyd, justly sentenced, be allowed to shirk work any more than they?

Phil was marched to the head of the line and a pick forced into his unwilling hands. The boy next in the line put his hands on Phil's shoulders, the overseer gave an order, and the line moved forward,

the guards walking on either side of Phil in case of further trouble. But the boy, though he was in a white heat of anger, realized that he was powerless. If he tried to hang back, those heavy hands on his shoulders pushed him roughly forward; so he was compelled to shuffle along with that horrible dragging step measured by the clanking chain between his ankles. Never in his life had the boy experienced such a sense of degradation, or been stirred by such murderous anger. He would not lift his eyes from the ground to meet the curious or pleased glances of any whom they passed — too well he knew that there were many who would rejoice at his degradation. As they approached the Grand, Phil's face flushed hotly. From the corner of his eye, he caught a glimpse of girls' dresses. What if Grace should be there to see him so? In spite of himself he could not suppress a groan.

It was at this moment that Dan, coming towards the hotel, caught sight of Phil at the head of the line. For an instant he stood still, unable to believe his eyes; then he dashed across the piazza and into the dining-room. Grace stood there, waiting for the breakfast call. Without a word, Dan caught her arm and whirled her across to the other side of the room. As he released her arm, she drew herself up with a proud little movement of surprise and displeasure. What did Dan mean by such rudeness? He had never ventured to do such a thing before. But as she glanced into his face, her anger vanished instantly.

"O Dan, what is it! Is Phil sick or anything?" she cried out anxiously.

Dan caught his breath and choked for an instant before he answered slowly, "No, Phil ain't sick — of course not. I — I wanted to ask you something"; he stammered confusedly over the last words.

"Well — what?" Grace was looking at him now in wondering perplexity, while from the other side of the room the other waitresses were watching the two curiously.

Dan cast wildly about in his mind. What could he say to keep her from suspecting something? "I — I want you to ask Brother if I can't see Phil to-night?" he blurted out hastily. "You know he said I could n't go to see him but once a week, 'cause you go every day."

Grace continued to gaze with wonder and perplexity into the plain face, now red with embarrassment. She hesitated. Why should Dan look so and act so queerly, if this were all? A vague uneasiness possessed her and made her heart beat quickly.

"Why, of course I'll ask him, Dan. If you want I'll stay away to-night and Brother will let you go in my place, I'm sure."

"O yes, that's just what I'd like," the boy answered hastily. He would keep her away from Phil to-day if he could.

"But I don't understand, Dan. Is there anything — more — wrong with Phil?" Grace questioned anxiously.

Dan shook his head. The gang must be out of sight by this time, and he was recovering his presence of mind.

"Don't you be worryin' 'bout Phil," he said reassuringly. "I told ye the' ain't anything the matter with him. It's only — only I wanted to talk over something with him, you know." He tried to speak carelessly.

In the girl's eyes the shadow of uneasiness still lingered, but the breakfast call had been sounded, and the citizens were pouring in, and she must attend to her duties. With a sigh of relief, Dan slipped away. If only the others would have sense enough to hold their tongues now, Grace need not know, for this morning at least, and perhaps Phil would make the best of it; but Dan dreaded — he did not know what. Only he knew too well that Phil had been cherishing an ugly, revengeful spirit during those days of solitary confinement, and he might do some dreadful thing if the overseer should be hard on him to-day, and the overseer had no love for Phil.

Dan was working now on another cottage, but as he worked he could look across to the field that the prisoners were ditching, and all the morning his eyes kept wandering over there where the gang was at work. Phil must be working, that was certain — they all were.

Yes, Phil was working now. He had had his lesson. When that shuffling march had brought the prisoners to the place where a ditch was to be dug, the over-

seer ordered Phil to set to work with the others. Phil said nothing, but he set his lips obstinately and stood motionless. Whereupon the two guards who had marched him out of the prison seized him again, and without a word began to walk him up and down, up and down, the line of workers. No one who has not tried to walk with shackled limbs can realize the misery of it. In five minutes the perspiration was rolling down Phil's face and every muscle in his body felt strained and quivering. Before noon roll-call the boy had surrendered.

"Give me that!" he cried out, pointing to the pick, and for the remainder of the morning he worked like the others — steadily and silently. Only when at noon the line was formed again, he looked at the overseer and said in a low tone:

"Can't I walk behind one of the others? I won't make any fuss."

The overseer had been "on the gang" himself in days gone by — he knew how it felt — and he told the big, careless, slouching fellow who had pushed Phil along in the morning, to head the line now. So Phil passed the hotel with his drooping face hidden behind the broad shoulders of Number 37, and hoped that Grace would not recognize him, if she were anywhere within sight.

Phil's rebellion was effectually ended now. He was convinced at last that fate was too much for him and, whether he would or not, he must live up to the spirit of Hadley Republic — nothing without labor.

It was many a day before Grace knew the history of that morning. When she learned that Phil was working out his sentence, she was very happy over it. She would gladly have walked by his side as he went back and forth to daily labor ; but she knew him well enough to be sure that it would be easier for him if he could feel that her eyes at least did not see his degradation, so she was careful never to be in sight when the prisoners passed, and so she was spared the knowledge that Phil was wearing the lowest badge of all — the iron chain.

What the next month was to the boy even his sister could but guess. She saw that he was greatly changed. All the old careless, idle good nature was gone. He was grave, silent, almost sullen still, as if brooding over his disgrace, but he worked — at first with a dogged persistence because he must ; and hard enough he found it, especially with those harassing shackles forever bringing him up with a sickening jerk. Night after night he went to bed lame and weary — too weary often to think — for hard manual labor was so new to him. But by degrees it became easier, and when his irons were removed life became more endurable, and the labor, though still hard and unpleasant, grew slowly easier as his hands hardened and his sinews strengthened.

After a time, in spite of the loathsome prison atmosphere of cell and stripes, Phil, quite to his own amazement, found himself, now and then, not so very miserable after all ; for he was young, and clean,

healthy blood was leaping through his veins, and strength and vigor increased in him as he worked and ate and slept, living the simple, wholesome life of the laboring man. And besides, after all, disgrace was not quite the same in this miniature republic as in the larger world outside. Many of the best citizens here had once worn the stripes as Phil was wearing them; yet now they were respected, and honored with high office. Phil was conscious that a new spirit of allegiance to the little commonwealth — a new pride in it — had begun to grow in the depths of his heart, unsuspected even by Grace or Dan — the two who knew and loved him best.

CHAPTER XI.

A LIVELY EPISODE.

THE fame of the republic was extending; its waiting list grew daily, and many came to see for themselves how good citizens were here developed, often from most unpromising material.

One day there had been an unusual number of visitors, and the next morning Brother received a letter that brought a very troubled look into his eyes. He summoned his helpers for consultation, and then called a meeting of the republic officials. Cases of petty larceny were not uncommon, naturally, since many of the girls and boys came from the lower classes; but this was a serious case. One of the ladies had written Brother that her pocket had been picked during her visit to the republic on the preceding day. She had lost a silver knife, and a pocket-book containing fifteen dollars. As she had discovered her loss before reaching home, and the articles were not to be found in the carriage, she believed that they had been lost at Hadley.

The case was put into the hands of the police commissioners, and most careful inquiries and investigations were made, resulting in the arrest of two girls and two boys on suspicion. The republic

was in a state of great excitement over the affair, the more so as, in spite of the most thorough and persevering investigations of the police, the thief who had robbed the bank, and Sales and Baum as well, had never been discovered. This new affair awakened fresh discussion and conjecture in regard to that other. Nothing else was talked about, and the attorney-general prophesied no end of trouble in securing a jury.

Dan, discussing the matter with Grace, declared indignantly that whoever was guilty it was n't Gene Cutler, and they were fools to arrest him just because he happened to have conducted that particular party over the place.

"But you don't think that either of those girls would do such a thing, do you?" Grace questioned anxiously.

"One of 'em might — that Anna Price has been up for larceny more 'n once, and it's been proved on her too, but" — Dan lowered his voice — "*I* believe Baum's the chap."

"Do you, Dan? Almost everybody else seems to think his arrest is a blunder. I thought he had ever so much money in the bank," Grace returned.

"So he has — republic money; but I've had my eye on him for some time, and I've got an idea that he's been planning to desert — and you know his republic money wouldn't count anywhere else. Besides, I know he's been trying on the sly to exchange it for U. S. money."

"Oh, I hope he did n't do it," sighed Grace. "I can't help hoping that the lady lost her pocketbook on the way—before she got here."

"She says not," Dan answered, shaking his head doubtfully.

When the preliminary trial was held, the two girls and Cutler were released for lack of evidence against them. Baum was held, but admitted to bail, which he had no difficulty in securing, as the evidence against him was wholly circumstantial, and by no means convincing. The bail was put at fifty dollars, and his friend and crony, Abe Sternburg, was his surety. He and Abe had had many business transactions together, and Abe laughed to scorn the idea of Reub's being guilty of the crime with which he was charged.

"He would n't be such a fool, I tell ye! Reub's got a head on his shoulders—what would he be runnin' it into a noose for? I'd go bail for him if 't was a hundred 'stead of fifty dollars!" so he stoutly declared.

For the remainder of that day Abe and Reuben were inseparable. The next morning Abe was the most furious boy that had been in Hadley Republic for many a day—for, before breakfast time, it was discovered that Baum was missing. He had taken French leave in the night.

Angry as he was, Abe wasted no time in lamenting his bond money forfeited, or his trust betrayed. He went without breakfast that morning, for time was precious. His speculations of late had not turned

out well. It was Reub's promise to put him in the way of retrieving his fortunes that had made him so willing to go on his bond; for Abe's bank account would not cover the sum for which he had made himself responsible, if all his debts were paid. As soon as he learned of Reub's flight, he rushed to his own room, and hastily flinging off his everyday clothes he arrayed himself in his best suit, his Sunday shoes, and his newest silk tie. Then he hurried over to Baum's room, but he found others there before him. It appeared that Reuben had been borrowing largely of late, and now his debtors were promptly on hand to confiscate his personal property.

Abe hung around, his hands in his pockets, watching the distribution, but saying little to anyone. Occasionally one of the others would throw him a word of half mocking sympathy or consolation.

"Cheer up, Abe — they'll bring him back most likely, an' you can watch your chance an' take it out of his hide. We'll all shut our eyes an' keep the police away," one laughingly assured him.

"Anyhow, Abe, you've got plenty of cash. You won't have to go on the town if you have lost a pile," was the consoling remark of a second.

"Say, Abe, ain't you kind o' green? Why didn't you pick out a plum 'fore everybody else had grabbed?" This last from a boy who had seized upon two of Baum's finest neckties, at which he was gazing with well pleased eyes as he spoke.

"Guess I'll take your advice, Johnny — an' them

two plums you 've got in your hands," returned Abe quietly, and as the other boys stared at him doubtfully, he pulled from his pocket a bill of sale which he had been shrewd enough to secure from Baum, and on the strength of that proceeded to gather up the personal property which the others had been at such pains to secure for themselves.

The tables were turned. Abe chuckled, and the other boys scowled as they departed empty-handed, growling over Abe and Reuben both as a pair of Jews — one as bad as the other.

Later that day, the police authorities seized Abe's possessions to make good the sum for which he was responsible as bondsman, so Reub's personal property and most of Abe's went to pay that debt, while Abe got what consolation he could from the fact that at least they could n't take his best clothes anyhow, so long as he kept them on his back.

Two weeks slipped away; then one afternoon a great shout went up from the happy-go-lucky throng congregated on Broadway, and the next moment there was a stampede, and girls and boys were racing across the green to see the runaway brought back. He was a sorry-looking figure, all his bold assurance gone. That handsome gray cheviot suit of Phil's, which Reuben had worn with such a jaunty, complacent air, was stained and frayed and torn. Reub was a striking object lesson as he tramped across to the jail between two policemen and under the scornful fire of more than a hundred unsympathetic eyes.

His flight had been generally considered to be sure proof of his guilt, and now that he was again in their hands, the police commissioners set to work with fresh diligence on the case. But they were very reticent; nothing was allowed to leak out, and, as day after day passed, public interest in the case flagged a little. Later, however, when it was known that Baum had engaged the "smartest" lawyer in the republic to defend him, there was a revival of interest, for the trial promised to be unusually exciting, and everybody was eager to attend it.

Trials were usually held in the evening when all the citizens were at liberty. When the appointed evening came, the bell was rung twice, as was customary, but this time few waited for the second summons, and not only was every seat filled, but all available standing room as well, before the judge appeared.

Dan had secured for Grace a good seat where she could see and hear all the proceedings. She had never attended a trial, and she looked, with eyes full of interest, over the crowded room. There was a platform at one end, with a big desk on which stood a large kerosene lamp. Several chairs were on the platform, and at one side was a bench which, Dan told her, was for the jury, and a little space railed off for a witness stand. A space at the back of the room was divided into small apartments, and above the low boarding in front of these was the sign, "Citizens are forbidden to climb over this partition." On the door of one of these little offices Grace noticed the name of R. T. Choate.

There was a buzz of talk all over the room, but it was grave and quiet—quite different from the noisy, merry gatherings outside. The bell rang out its last slow strokes, the low murmur in the room hushed to sudden silence, and every face was turned expectantly towards the door. It was so still that footsteps in the corridor outside could be plainly heard. Then the sergeant-at-arms entered, with the baton which was his badge of office. After him came the judge, Robert Hyde, and the attorney-general, who took the chair on the judge's left. On the other side sat a boy with a thin dark face, and keen black eyes gleaming behind his glasses. This was Rufus T. Choate. It was generally believed that his name was simply Thomas Choate, and that when he began to study law here at the republic he had "tacked the Rufus on to his front name," since which he had refused to answer to the name of Thomas or Tom. However that might be, he was now known as Rufus T. Choate, and he was a diligent student of the law, having read for a year past under the direction of a prominent lawyer in a neighboring town—a man much interested in the bright boys of the small republic.

"Where's Baum?" Grace whispered, and as Dan answered quickly, "Look!" she saw a trap door in the floor thrown open, and through it Baum appeared, closely followed by the sheriff.

The judge called the court to order, and then Jack Hodge, the attorney-general, rose, and announced the case of "The citizens of the Hadley Junior Repub-

lic *vs.* Reuben Baum, for robbery." He handed over the indictment to Choate, who read it to the court.

The attorney-general called for jurors, asking any who were willing to serve, and who had not formed or expressed an opinion on the case, to rise. A dozen or more stood, but several of them were challenged, and others had to be found to serve in their stead. At last twelve were secured, and sworn in with much solemnity. Then the judge turned to the prisoner and demanded:

"Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty!" The prisoner's voice rang loud and defiant.

The attorney-general rose and made a brief address.

"This is a very serious case, your Honor," he began, "and we have been mighty careful how we went to work about it. 'T is n't like the cases of petty larceny we have — stealing apples and such truck — but we have evidence enough to convince any fair-minded jury that the prisoner at the bar is guilty. The first witness I'll call is Mr. Sales."

Tom Sales took his place on the witness stand and, having been sworn, Hodge called upon him to tell all that he knew about the case.

"Well," he began, "I was in the library readin' that day, an' Baum he was in there lookin' at the 'Youth's Companion,' an' I see the lady that lost the pocketbook sittin' in a chair right close to Baum, an' I see Baum keep edgin' his chair up closer to her, an' when he see me lookin' at him, he winked at me

an' pretended he was jest a-foolin' — lookin' over her shoulder like, to see what she was readin.' I s'posed 'twas only his fun, an' I never thought any more about it till that night when I went up to bed I happened to think of something I wanted to ask Reub about, an' I jest kicked open his door', an' he looked up and yelled at me to keep out, an' I see him stuff some U. S. bills into his pocket, an' I asked him where he swiped that, an' he said 't was n't U. S. money, but he would n't show it to me — an' that's all I know."

Choate leaned forward and crooked his forefinger impressively at the witness.

"Can you swear that it was U. S. money that you saw Baum put into his pocket?" he asked.

"Why — it looked like greenbacks from where I stood. Course I can't swear that 't was."

"You only think it might have been?"

"No; I don't either — I think it *was*. I'm sure as I can be of anything that I ain't touched or seen real close," Sales protested.

"But you admit that it might not have been greenbacks?"

"Ye-es, of course it *might* not but I b'lieve 't was."

"And in the library all you saw was that Baum hitched his chair near the lady who lost the money?"

"Yes-es, that's all."

"You did not see him touch the lady's dress?"

"No, but he might a-done it 'thout my seeing him."

"Of course — and you might have done it without his seeing you, perhaps. Did you ever try to find the pocket in a lady's dress?"

"Nop,— did you?" retorted Sales, promptly.

A little ripple of laughter swept over the room, but the judge instantly rapped on the desk for order.

"I am not on the witness stand," replied Choate sharply," but I've heard folks say that it is n't easy to find the pocket in a lady's dress these days, and if my client was smart enough to find and empty this particular pocket without your seeing him, when you were sitting there watching him —"

"I was n't watchin' him, either," interrupted the witness.

Choate went on as if he had not heard, "Then he must be a smarter fellow than we've given him credit for being." He smiled carelessly and snapped his fingers as he added to Hodge, "If you've no more important evidence than this, the trial will not take much of our time."

Hodge scowled and answered, "I'm going to call witnesses to show that the prisoner did business in ways next door to dishonest — just keeping inside the law, and that's all."

"But you admit that he *did* keep within the law?" Choate returned instantly.

"Well, by the skin of his teeth, and that's about all; and a fellow that skates on such thin ice as that is bound to bring up in an air-hole if he keeps on skating," returned Hodge.

Various sharp practices of Baum's were brought to light by the following witnesses, the last being Abe Sternburg, who glared vengefully at the prisoner as he told how Baum had implored him to go bail for him, and had promised to help him in various ways if he only would, and then had sneaked off and left him in the lurch that very night.

"Let me see — did n't I hear something about a bill of sale that my client gave you?" inquired Choate, with a bland smile, when Abe had told his story.

Abe admitted that he had such a bill of sale, but added that it did n't begin to cover his loss, for Baum had worn his best clothes when he left and had carried off as much as he could.

Finally a little colored girl was put on the stand. She had never been a witness before, and she rolled her eyes about and giggled nervously when she saw everybody in the court-room looking at her.

"Now tell us what you dug out of the dirt," Hodge said to her.

"I — I dunno," faltered the girl, her eyes roving from the stern face of the judge to the scowling prisoner, and from him to Choate, whose eyes, through his gleaming glasses, seemed to frighten her quite out of her few wits.

Choate leaned over and whispered to his client, then turned to the witness with a mocking smile.

"Don't be afraid, Sally," Hodge said to the child. "Just tell now what you told me the other day about

Baum." He held up a silver knife, and a sudden stir of excited interest swept over the room. "You found this?"

The little witness nodded so violently that the kinky black braids danced behind her head, making a grotesque silhouette on the wall. The sight of the knife seemed to have unloosed her tongue and she rattled off briskly:

"Me 'n Addie Smith was a-makin' mud pies down by the girls' swimming pool, an' Addie she would n't play fair. She made me do all the mixin' an' she wouldn't let me do any of the bakin', and so I said —"

"Never mind all that — tell us about the knife," Hodge interrupted impatiently.

"Well *ain't* I tellin' ye? I said how 't me an Addie Smith was a-playin' —"

Choate grinned and whispered again to Baum, and Hodge once more interrupted his witness, while Addie Smith in one of the front seats giggled till the sergeant-at-arms marched up and tapped her warningly on the shoulder; at which the witness in the box laughed till her white teeth glistened in the lamplight.

"We don't want to hear anything about Addie Smith — only just about this knife. Tell us where you found it," exclaimed Hodge, sharply.

The face of the dusky little witness underwent a sudden transformation. The white teeth disappeared as she answered crossly:

"Ain't I a-tellin', only you keep a-stoppin' me? Me 'n Addie Smith was a-playin' —"

The laughter of the audience broke out at that, but was promptly hushed by the sharp order of the judge.

Hodge gazed despairingly at his troublesome witness, and made another unsuccessful attempt to get at her story; finally he turned to the judge with an apologetic air.

"I must beg your Honor to excuse the witness," he said. "She is n't used to this business, and I guess I'll have to let her tell the story in her own fashion, else we'll never get at it."

"Never get at it, I guess," repeated Choate in a low tone.

"Well, go ahead and tell us as quick as you can," Hodge added to the bright-eyed little witness, whose teeth flashed again in a quick smile, as she galloped on:

"Me 'n Addie Smith was a-playin' down by the girls' swimmin' pond, a-makin' mud pies we was, 'n' Addie she would n't play fair. She kept me a-mixin' an' diggin' dirt an' everything, an' she would n't let me do any of the bakin'; an' we had jest lovely bits of china for bake dishes, an' Addie she kept 'em all her own self, so I got mad an' went off to dig angle worms for the boys; an' I was a-diggin' worms when I found that pretty knife right in the ground, I did, an' I guess then Addie Smith wished —"

"What did you do with the knife?" the judge broke in sharply.

The child caught her breath nervously at the stern tone, and answered vacantly, "I dunno."

"Don't know what you did with it?" repeated the judge.

"O yes; I put it in my pocket."

"But what did you do with it afterwards?"

"Showed it to Addie Smith, an' she —"

"But after that?" questioned Hodge with a savage frown. This exasperating witness was spoiling entirely the force of his strongest bit of evidence. He longed to shake her.

"Didn't do nuffin' after that. My mammy she found it in my pocket an' took it 'way from me — she allus takes things 'way from me," was the grumbling reply.

The child's mother confirmed this statement, and added that she had taken the knife to Hodge.

"If you look at the knife, your Honor," Hodge said to the judge, "you will understand the importance of the 'find.' It is worth all the trouble I've had in getting the story told here."

He handed the knife to the judge, who examined it carefully. As he opened it a small flat key dropped on his desk. Hodge, keenly watching the prisoner, saw a swift change of expression in his face, and his own brightened exultantly.

"That key," he said slowly and distinctly, "has, as you see, G. 27 on it. That means that it belongs to the door of number 27 Grand Hotel — the prisoner's room."

At this a hush of intense interest fell on the courtroom. The judge, having scrutinized the key, passed it, with the knife, to Choate, whose air of careless indifference had not changed. As Choate examined the key, he bent his head to catch the words that Baum was whispering in his ear.

The attorney-general arose, and after a brief review of the evidence, and frequent reminders to the jury, again took his seat. There was a stir and movement all over the crowded room. Grace, looking about, saw Brother on one of the back seats. She noted the unwonted seriousness on his face as he gazed towards the prisoner at the bar.

Then Choate arose and called the first witness for the defence. He seemed to know as if by instinct just what questions to ask to get the facts that he wanted to bring out. His witnesses were few, and Grace thought that their evidence was not very important anyway. She turned to Dan in surprise when Choate said that he had no more witnesses to call.

"He's dependin' on his tongue. He can talk a blue streak and persuade most any jury that black is white, no matter what the facts are," Dan whispered in reply.

But now Hodge rose to speak. He reviewed the case, calling the attention of the jury to every fact that told against the prisoner, and dwelling strongly upon the serious nature of the crime. It was a good speech for such a boy to make, and the faces of the jury showed that they were impressed by it.

But Choate had the last word, and, with jurors so young, the last speaker was pretty sure to make the strongest impression. It was so in this case; and besides, Choate was a born orator. As Dan had said, he could sway a jury almost as he would. The evidence had to be very convincing indeed to convict a client for whom Choate did his best.

Now he began deliberately to tear to pieces the evidence of the prosecution. He had a dry, humorous way of putting things; by a few cutting words he could hold the most serious statement up to ridicule and make his young listeners think just what he wanted them to think. As he spoke that day, Brother shook his head more than once, and his eyes became very serious indeed.

"I must see that Choate does not defend anyone who ought to be convicted," he was saying to himself. "And I'm pretty sure that Baum is guilty."

Hodge twisted uneasily in his seat and bit his lips as he saw how Choate's sarcastic hits and cunning arguments were bewildering the young jury. He too firmly believed that Baum was guilty.

"He can't get over that knife and key," he assured himself, yet with a vague uneasiness, for Choate seemed to be sailing along as if sure of victory. Ah, he was speaking of the knife now!

"As to this knife and key, which my legal brother seems to consider such damaging evidence against my client—I could laugh, if this was n't such a serious charge that nobody wants to laugh over it—but

this key" — he held it up and smiled as he did so — "this key does belong to the room occupied by my client at the Grand — that's all true — and I've no reason to doubt that this knife is the one that was lost when the pocket-book was lost, but" — he paused to make his next words more impressive — "but the point is, that the finding of this key with the knife does not prove anything whatever against my client, because he lost the key several weeks ago and had to buy a new one, and," he held up a second key, "here is the new one which he had in his pocket when he came in here to-day, and this was bought several days before the loss of the pocket-book." He held up a second key, then passed it to the judge.

Hodge leaned over eagerly to examine it. Yes, it was certainly true. It was a duplicate of the key found with the knife, and that key was a little rusty too. Probably what Choate said was true, and so this strongest bit of evidence was worthless after all.

Choate ended with a few ringing sentences and a confident appeal to the jury for an acquittal. Then he sat down with a triumphant air, while Hodge dropped back in his seat, his face blank with disappointment. The judge arose and began to speak, just as the sergeant-at-arms, who had been standing near the door, walked forward and handed a note to Hodge. The latter's face changed instantly. He cast a triumphant glance at Choate and sprang to his feet.

"Please your Honor," he said eagerly to the judge,

who, not liking to have his speech interrupted, frowned coldly upon him, "please your Honor, I beg that this trial be deferred till the next court day."

"On what ground do you ask that?" the judge inquired.

"On the ground that evidence of great importance has just come to my knowledge, and I want time to verify it before bringing this new witness into court." He handed the note he had received to the judge. Choate strained his eyes to catch a glimpse of the message as the judge read it, but he could not make out a word.

The judge folded the paper in his hand, gravely considered for a moment, then granted the motion for delay; and the next moment the prisoner disappeared through the trap door like a jack-in-a-box, and the citizens tumbled tumultuously out of the court-room, everybody wondering what the new evidence could be.

Baum was hurried back to his cell, and there Choate visited him half an hour later. Choate's look was threatening as he faced his client.

"See here now, Baum," he began, taking care, however, to lower his voice so that the other prisoners should not hear him, "you know I told you in the beginning that I would n't take your case unless you told me everything. I ain't asking whether you took that pocket-book or not, — though I've got my own opinion about that, — but if there's any more evidence that you know of, you better out with it

now, or I'll throw up the case this minute, — that's all there is about it!"

"Oh, I say, Choate, don't cut up like that! How do I know what lies they've trumped up against me? There ain't anything else that I know of, — an' I can't say any more'n that," whined Baum.

"Well, I'm mad's a hatter!" growled Choate. "I don't care a button about you, you understand; I'd just as soon you'd be jailed for a year as not, but I don't choose to lose a case, — that's what's the matter with me, — and if I do find out that you've been trying to fool me, I'll make you sorry for it, and no mistake about it!"

"I ain't, Rufe, — honest Injun, I ain't!" Baum protested almost tearfully. "I can't guess what their new evidence is. Don't see how it can be anything worth while."

Choate listened, scowling, then paced up and down the narrow cell, his dark brows drawn together in a frown of angry perplexity.

"If I could only find out," he muttered, "but it's working in the dark, and I don't know where to expect a fight. Shucks! I *was* a fool ever to take your case, Reub, and I thought so all the time."

"Oh, don't throw me over, Choate! I'll pay you more'n you asked if you'll only get me out of this. I've thought of a way to get some more U. S. money. Do stick to me, Rufe. You're ten times as smart as Hodge any day; you can talk over the jury jest as easy! They'd have brought in a verdict of

‘Not guilty’ in ten minutes to-day if Hodge had n’t got the case put off.”

Baum had been shrewd enough to touch Choate’s weak spot — his pride in his oratorical ability. The frown slowly faded from his forehead as the two talked the case over, and when Choate left, Baum was assured that he would not throw up the case, but he shook his head gloomily over the price he would have to pay for this service.

“I’ll be broke — dead broke,” he moaned, “an’ I won’t have no money, so I can’t skip out the back door again.” “Skipping out the back door” was the republic term for deserting. “I’ll have to stay an’ squeeze the money out of the other fellers somehow.” He spent most of the time between this and the next court day in devising schemes for making money without working.

But these schemes were not to be realized for many a day. When the case came up again it was speedily disposed of. Some of the worn mattresses in the boys’ rooms were to be made over, Baum’s among the number, and in this mattress had been found the missing pocket-book. It had been slipped in through a slit in the covering and the slit sewed up with black thread. The mattress and the pocket-book were produced in the court-room, and this, added to other damaging evidence, was too much even for Choate’s beguiling tongue to overcome. Baum sullenly declared that somebody else must have put the pocket-book in the mattress — he did n’t know anything about

it—but Choate glared angrily at him, and curtly advised him to “shut up”; and no one was surprised when, after a brief absence from the court-room, the jury brought in a verdict of “Guilty,” and Baum was marched back to jail with a sentence of one year to work out.

As he sat in his cell that evening his face was dark and forbidding. He had always been rough and coarse, but now all that was evil in him seemed to have come to the surface.

A brilliant sunset of red and gold made a glory of the western sky, and Baum’s grated window faced the west, but he saw nothing of the beauty of it; he only sat there, waiting with a savage impatience for it to fade into darkness. He would have blotted those luminous golden clouds that moment into inky blackness, had he had the power. It seemed to him that the darkness would *never* come! When at last it began to fall softly over the green, he stood at his window watching and listening in restless excitement.

“If he don’t come,” he muttered to himself in a threatening whisper, “if he *don’t* come, I’ll find a way to make him suffer for it!”

When his patience was frayed to the last thread, a low “St!” sounded outside the window. Baum put his face close to the bars.

“Is it you, Jim?” he whispered.

“Hush up!” came in a yet lower whisper from without. You want me to get caught? Here!” A darker shadow appeared at the grating, something

was poked through, the shadow melted away in the surrounding darkness, and Baum was standing with an exultant smile on his face as he fingered the short stout knife in his hand. He lost no time in setting to work with it, but he worked with the utmost care. The mortar that held the window bars in place was none of the best — Baum had speedily discovered that, and had planned days before how he could most easily loosen those bars. Now he dug and dug, taking care not to let the broken bits fall on to the floor lest the sound be heard by wakeful ears in some other cell. But though the boy labored with feverish haste, he made but slow progress, and he knew well that unless he could complete his task and get away that night there would be no other opportunity. This was his last chance, for the prison keeper, in the morning, could not fail to discover what he had been doing. He gouged away furiously, and as, bit by bit, he cleared away the crumbling mortar, he was listening, listening always, so intently that it seemed as if his hearing was a hundred times keener than ever before. He heard the footsteps of the watchman the instant he turned the corner of the building, and as he paced slowly and sleepily along that side, Baum stood like a black shadow in the dusky cell — motionless as the walls that shut him in — until the footsteps died away once more as the watchman crossed over towards the girls' jail. Then Baum would fall to work again with furious haste. But with all his haste and all his hard

labor, the work advanced but slowly, so slowly that more than once the boy stopped for a moment, tempted to give up in despair. It seemed to him that that chapel clock struck the hours every five minutes; and the darkness would so soon be gone, and his one chance with it! At last, dropping his knife, he seized the bars and shook them savagely, despairingly, with all his strength; and, as he did so, one gave way so suddenly that the boy fell back on the floor, where he lay motionless, his heart beating fearfully with dread lest the noise bring some one to investigate. But he was the only one awake in the jail; the keeper slumbered on his cot in the little closet by the outer door, and at that moment the watchman was crawling drowsily along in front of the other jail. In a moment Baum was up again, working away with redoubled haste and eagerness. So near — so near, he *could* not fail now! Soon another bar gave way, and another. When the last one was removed Baum dragged his stool over beneath the window and stood on it, waiting with what patience he could till the watchman should have passed once more. His nerves were tingling with eagerness to be gone — already there was a suggestion of dawn, a little lifting of the heavy darkness — and hark! There was a rooster crowing!

Slowly the watchman paced along; then suddenly he stopped and seemed to listen just outside the window. Baum held his breath in an agony of dread. To be stopped now would be too much!

But at last the slow footsteps passed on and around the corner, and the next moment Baum was creeping noiselessly out of the window, — the jail was in the basement, — and then, his shoes in his hand, he darted swiftly across the open space. In the shadow of the nearest tree he stopped to listen, flattening himself against the black trunk. The darkness was surely passing, for now he could clearly see the figure of the watchman against the sky.

"He's seen me," Baum thought, as the watchman paused; and he tried to hug the tree yet more closely. It was hopeless after all; he could not get away now — it was too near daylight. Then, as he glanced towards the girls' jail, suddenly a new thought came to him. If he could only slip in there! They would never think of looking for him in the girls' prison, — and there was that unfinished loft with the trap-door. It was the safest hiding-place on the grounds. If he could *only* get in there!

As if in answer to his wish he saw the door of the jail open, and the keeper — a girl — came out and called to the watchman.

"I'm sick," she said, "and I'm going to the hospital for some medicine. I don't think there's a soul awake here, but of course you'll keep an eye on the door till I come back."

"All right," the watchman answered with a yawn; and then, with sleepy, stumbling steps, he turned his back and walked on.

"Now's my chance!" thought Baum; and the

instant the other disappeared around the corner of the jail, he darted across, pushed open the unlatched door, and sped swiftly up the stairs of the girls' jail to the top floor.

Under the trap-door in the ceiling he stopped. The cover was slipped aside for better ventilation; but there was no ladder — no steps of any sort, nothing to stand on. In the corner of the hallway, against a window, stood a broom. The boy's feverish eyes fell upon it; he snatched it noiselessly, and it served him for want of better assistance. Leaning upon it as a support, he actually succeeded in getting a momentary foothold on the narrow top of the pine wainscoting that ran along the wall, and from there he just managed to reach the edge of the opening in the ceiling. For an instant he hung there by his hands; then he pulled himself up by main strength, and, crawling through, dropped down on the floor of the unfinished loft. He shuddered as the broom slipped noisily to the floor and the loose trap-door rattled as he scrambled through; but as no other sound followed, he drew a long breath of relief and stretched himself out on the floor to rest. It had been a trying night altogether. But in a moment he started up again. There was the broom on the floor under the trap-door — it might betray his hiding-place. He drew from his pocket an old fish-line, and chuckled as, with trembling fingers, he straightened it out.

"Took it out o' Choate's pocket, right in court, an' he never knew," he exulted silently. "I thought

it might come in handy when I see the end a-danglin' out. Much obliged, Rufe. Pay ye for it some-time — mebbe ! ”

It was growing light rapidly now. In an hour the farmers, and the boys who worked under them, would be stirring, and some of the girl prisoners might be awake too. There was not a minute to lose. He made a slipnoose and began to fish for the broom through the trap-door. It was nerve-trying work — Baum had never been conscious that he had any nerves until this night — but at last, at last, he caught the noose over the handle and pulled very cautiously. If it should fall now, he would be discovered without fail, for the noise would surely arouse some of the sleepers. Slowly — slowly, it was almost within reach — oh, the noose was slipping! — no, it had caught again. Baum reached his arm down carefully, grasped the handle, and swiftly hauled the broom up through the opening. Then at last he felt secure. No one surely would ever think of looking for him there — no one would imagine it possible for him to have climbed up there, with no steps or chair or anything. He nodded triumphantly.

“ Reub, my boy, you're nobody's fool,” he exulted. “ If only I could get some grub, now, I might stay here for a week an' watch 'em all. I say, 't would be good fun to stay up here an' watch 'em through them little windows — the biggest kind o' fun — an see 'em a-huntin' everywhere for me ! ”

But he had to admit that this was a pleasure that

he must deny himself, since there was no possible way of getting food up there. He would stay there until night and then he must get away. It would be easy enough to drop out of one of the windows at the end of the corridor on the lower floor. But even so, he must go hungry all day. His face lengthened at the prospect. He was "hungry enough now to eat nails," he growled, and he thought longingly of the great kettles of oatmeal that would soon be cooking for breakfast. After all, running away had its drawbacks, so had — some other things.

He crept softly over to the end of the loft overlooking the jail. It was light enough now for him to see the window through which he had escaped. It would not be long before the sharp eyes of one of the police commissioners would discover that barless window.

The eastern sky was beginning to take on soft opal tints of pink and gold, but Baum's eyes had never learned to see the beauty in earth or sky — the sunrise colors had no charm for him. He watched with half-idle, half-impatient curiosity the awakening life of the little republic, seeing it for the first time as a whole — himself outside of it all.

"There comes Fan — 'spect she's got her medicine," he commented, as the keeper of the girls' prison came out of the hospital door. "Wonder if she'll spy that window." But she passed it unnoting, and Baum heard the door below open and then close behind her.

"There's the farmers startin' out. Reckon Jackson's up in the garoot by this time, routin' out all the boys. Fools they are to do farm work when they have to turn out 'fore anybody else in the mornin'! And there — O my! now there'll be a rumpus — Tom Bruen's spied that window!" He drew back cautiously, yet remained where he could see what happened below.

Bruen was calling excitedly to one of the farm boys to go for Bacon, the keeper of the prison. In a few minutes Bacon's face appeared at the window inside the cell. Baum laughed again in noiseless exultation.

"Now Bacon 'll have a taste of his own medicine," he whispered. "He was mighty willin' to witness against me in court 'cause I made him pony up an' pay back all that money I'd lent him. He made a fuss too 'cause I charged him six per cent interest. He knew what interest he'd have to pay when he borrowed the money. Don't I wish I was near enough to hear what he's sayin'! Oh it's rich — this is fun! They'll never think of lookin' here, an' it's worth goin' hungry for, to see the play like this."

A little crowd gathered rapidly about the window of the deserted cell. Baum knew that they were all talking about his escape — nobody had ever escaped from the prison before. He could imagine some of the things that would be said, but he thirsted to hear them all. He counted himself a hero, but his self-glorification lost half its charm with no one to admire and envy him.

He did not feel so happy when the call for breakfast rang musically through the air, and he saw the citizens hurrying towards the hotel and restaurants. His face grew very gloomy as he thought of the bountiful meal that they were all to enjoy.

"All a-stuffin' themselves, an' me here hungry enough to eat my own head!" he growled. Never mind—I guess I c'n stand it for one day—I've got to, but I'll get off to-night an' then I'll get a good square meal if I have to break into somebody's pantry to—borrow it." Even to himself he preferred not to use that other disagreeable word—steal.

It was a long, weary day, in spite of the keen enjoyment he had in watching—himself unseen—the life of the small republic. He dared not sleep, for there was always the possibility of somebody happening to suggest a search of the loft. They seemed to be making a very thorough search indeed; he felt an uneasy tingling of his blood as he saw the searching parties set out and go systematically from building to building. The girls' jail was the last one searched. When he saw them coming towards the door, Baum crouched beside the trap-door, his ears strained to catch every word spoken down below. If they should bring steps and try to enter the loft, he would clap the heavy cover over and throw himself across it. His face darkened—his eyes grew blood-shot and threatening. He drew from his pocket the stout knife that had loosened his prison bars. The

blade was broken and jagged, but it was a dangerous weapon still.

"I'll use it — vow I will, if they try to come up here!" he declared to himself, his lips set sullenly. "I won't work on their old gang — I won't, I *won't*! They're comin' up the stairs now."

They tramped noisily up over the bare stairs and through the corridor, stopping to look into every cell, the occupants having now gone out to work.

Baum was listening breathlessly.

"It's jest wastin' time to look for him here. How could he get into the girls' prison?" ("That's Tom Sales," said Baum to himself.)

"Well, we've looked through every other building. If he ain't here he must 'a' got off. ("Slocum," commented the listener above.)

"Say, won't Rufe Choate be madder'n a hornet? He's lost his case, an' now his fees, too." ("Thompson," said Baum, as he silently echoed the chuckle of satisfaction from below. Choate was not very popular.)

"Oh, chuck it! What's the use of pokin' round here? He ain't in this place unless he's up aloft there, an' he could n't have got up there 'less he sprouted some wings." ("Gardiner," said Baum.)

"Mebbe he crawled up like a earwig." ("That's Blake.")

"Say, boys, let's look there, anyhow. I don't see myself how he could have got up there, but he may have done it all the same. Blake, run down stairs and get a chair, will ye?"

"Aw, Hyde, you're a fool — 's if any feller could get up there! Try it yourself an' see how you'd make out." ("Thompson again." Baum's breath came fast, and his heart was beating so loudly that he felt as if those below must hear it.)

The boys lingered in the corridor waiting for Blake to bring the chair, and presently there was a noisy thumping on the stairs.

"Yank her along, Blakey. The judge he wants to see if Baum's playin' Uncle Tom up in this garoot," mocked Tom Sales, and a general laugh followed. Nobody believed that the fugitive was really up there.

"Here, hold this chair steady, some of you," said Hyde, gruffly, as he drew it under the trap door, mounted on the back, and gripped the edge of the opening, preparatory to swinging himself up. The next moment the trap door was lifted and slammed down on his clinging hands with a force that made him yell with pain, as he dropped hastily to the floor, shaking his bleeding fingers.

Instantly a wild excitement took possession of the group below.

"He *is* up there, sure pop!"

"The judge was right. Guess he wishes now he had n't been in such a hurry to go ahead, though!"

"What shall we do?"

"How shall we get him down?"

"Go for Brother — somebody go for Brother!"

But Hyde called out angrily, "We won't go for Brother, either! We'll get that —"

"Look out, judge!" Thompson called warningly, "You'll get yourself in for a fine!"

Hyde, with difficulty, restrained his angry tongue. Of course it would never do for the judge of the Supreme Court to be fined for bad language, but his dark face was furious with pain and anger.

"Are you going to let one fellow stand off the whole crowd of us?" he shouted. "I'm ready to go up there and get that — rascal." He swallowed with difficulty the adjective that trembled on his tongue.

"But really, Hyde," argued Gardiner, raising his voice above the tumult of cries and shouts and suggestions, "I don't see how we are to get up there. We can't without a ladder or something, and even with that he has a big advantage over us, trying to get through that narrow place."

"Of course he has, but we're six to one and we're bound to get him even if he does show fight. He's got no pistol — he can't shoot us." Plainly, Hyde was no coward.

"No, but he's got a knife prob'ly — the one he dug out them bars with," returned Gardiner.

This was a sobering suggestion. It was not pleasant to think of forcing a passage through that trap, to be met with a knife in the hands of a desperate boy. But Hyde, shaking his bleeding right hand in the air, raised his voice again, and his tone of command silenced for a moment the voices of the others.

"Go get the ladder from the barn," he ordered.

“That fellow is going to be brought down. He won’t be such a fool as to use his knife if he has one, for he knows well enough that that would be a state prison affair, and not a Hadley prison either!”

He meant Baum to hear, and Baum did, and slowly and sullenly shut his jagged knife and slipped it into his boot, on the bare chance that it might not be discovered and taken from him when he was captured, for he knew well enough now that resistance was useless — that he must surely be overcome by numbers, and that speedily. All the same, he set his teeth — determined to resist as long as he could. So he settled himself heavily across the trap-door and waited, still listening to every sound from below.

Soon he heard the bumping of the ladder as the boys hurried up the stairs with it. He heard them set it under the trap-door, and he braced himself to hold it down, knowing all the time how useless it was. He had the advantage of position, but even so, he could not long hold that door against all those strong arms below. In spite of him, they forced it up, flinging him aside, and then two of them clambered up into the loft, and though he fought desperately, it availed nothing. The others climbed up — they were too many for him. They held him down, while a boy was sent for shackles, and when those came, Baum had to give in and let them take him back to the prison, a crowd of boys of all sizes tagging on behind. When once more he found himself locked into a cell, he knew that there was before him

a year of hard labor, with no chance for shirking — no hope of escape.

He did not know until later, that when this sentence expired he would have another to serve, for somebody had turned state's evidence, and Baum was found to be guilty of the bank robbery as well. His own reported loss in that connection had been but a clever dodge to avert suspicion from himself.

CHAPTER XII.

A BIRTHDAY FEAST.

THE day after Grace Boyd had her talk with Lizzie Burt, she wrote a long letter to her father. The answer came promptly, and then she had an interview with Brother. The result of this interview was the appearance of Brother in the dining-room the next day. He came at supper time, and as he entered was greeted with a chorus of most pressing invitations from those present, to stay and have supper with them; but he laughingly refused, even when some of the boys forced him into a seat and spread a napkin on his knees.

"Not this time, children. I've come to talk, not to eat, to-night," he told them.

"Eat first and talk afterwards!" somebody shouted; but Brother shook his head and declared that he must make his little speech and go.

"One of the good friends of our republic," he began, "has a plan which I have been asked to explain to you. He thinks that your dining-room here might be improved in many ways, and — pardon the suggestion — the table manners of some of you, as well. So he offers a prize to those who shall have

the neatest table and the quietest and best table manners — for the next six weeks."

"What's the prize?" called out Pony King. Pony was never backward about asking questions.

"The prize is — the complete furnishings for a table — cloths, napkins, and handsome dishes and silver."

The boys exchanged doubtful glances, but the housewifely instinct in some of the girls enabled them to appreciate this offer, and their eyes began to shine.

"Who's to decide which table wins?" inquired Dora Street.

"You are yourselves to appoint a committee of three — two girls and one boy. The members of this committee will keep a daily record of each table, and the prize will go to the one that they consider most deserving of it."

A few more questions were asked and answered, and then Brother went away, and a noisy tumult of discussion broke out, mingled with the clatter of knives and forks and dishes. To Grace it seemed as if the room had never been so noisy and disorderly before. It was a little discouraging sometimes, and never easy to her — this service in the dining-room. She had to shut her eyes and ears to so many things, and think of Phil, to make it endurable. To-night there seemed to be much diversity of opinion about the competition and the prize. Many did not consider the prize worth trying for, but these were reminded by others that they were bound to be neat

and orderly at table anyway, or at least to try to be.

"Ain't we a-gettin' fined all the time for noise an' sloppin' an' everything?" demanded a towheaded wearer of overalls in an aggrieved tone, and then he set his tumbler down on his fork, and the consequence was a stream of water over the tablecloth and indignant reproaches from the others at his table.

"Well, if you ain't a reg'lar knock-over!"

"You ought to eat in the kitchen, Mack — that's where *you* ought to eat."

"Else in the pigpen," added a girl whose dress had caught a part of the water.

"Queer — ain't it? — what a lot o' water seems to be in a glass when it tips over like that," remarked the general peacemaker in a reflective tone.

"Huh!" growled the boy who sat next her. "*We* won't get no prize unless we bounce Mack."

"Some more bread, please," piped the culprit with a cheerful grin — quite undisturbed by the uncomplimentary remarks flung at him.

That evening the inspection committee was appointed, and close was the watch that was kept on the tables thereafter. In a short time there was a marked improvement.

The girls wanted that prize table — wanted it badly. They inspired some of the older boys with a similar ambition, and these kept the careless youngsters under rigid discipline. It was of no use for a boy to try to hide under his plate the spot he had

made on the tablecloth. It was sure to be promptly discovered and the heaviest allowable fine exacted from him. There was also a noticeable lessening of the noise. Voices were lowered, and the boy who scraped his chair noisily on the bare floor now was compelled to pay for the performance. The boys grumbled, but they had to pay, and they grew daily more careful. When at last one observant boy remarked that it was his opinion that there'd be only girls at that prize table, the spirit of rivalry began to stir in the boys. They cared little about the fine table, but it would never do to let the girls win it, "they'd put on too many airs over it"; so the boys watched themselves and each other with critical eyes.

A month later the change was very marked. Lizzie spoke of it to Grace one evening, as the waitresses were taking their supper together.

"It will be awful hard for that committee to decide about the table," she said. "Most everybody's trying for it now."

"I don't see why *we* should n't have it!" exclaimed another waiter. "I'm sure there is n't any table neater than ours, and as to manners—" She stopped with a laugh as another girl quoted merrily:

"'Self-praise goes a very little ways,' Emma."

"It's true, all the same—what Emma says," added Lizzie. "And then there's another thing that's true, and that is, that Grace Boyd ought to have the credit for it."

"I? For what?" exclaimed Grace, in wide-eyed

surprise. "I've never said a single word about table manners to one of you girls."

"No," assented another, "you have n't. If you had, we'd likely have been mad at you an' 't would n't have done one bit of good — anything you could say."

"Well, then?" Grace looked from one face to another, questioningly.

"Well, then," repeated Sue Fraley, "don't you see how it is, Grace? Of course we all noticed right away how different your table manners were from ours. You never bang things round, nor clatter your knife an' fork, nor slop on the cloth; an' seems if you're always watching for a chance to pass bread or something to somebody else. An' you never put your knife in your mouth, nor — O dear! lots o' little things that the rest of us always did an' never thought a thing about — till you came." She turned to the others. "I don't know how 't is with the rest of you girls, but I know I felt like a big, clumsy elephant the first time she sat down at our table."

"That's it, Sue; you express my sentiments exactly!" chimed in another.

Grace felt the hot color burning in her cheeks, and she had to fight back the tears as she listened to these girls — these girls who had never had homes like hers. Her voice thrilled with tender sympathy for them as she cried out, "Girls, *girls!* If you could know how ashamed I feel when you say such things of me, when I —" she looked from one to

another, her eyes shining through tears. "Girls, I've been just careless and selfish. I have n't tried to be friends with you all, and make our table pleasant for you — as I might have done. But I'm going to now — you'll see!" She had caught a glimpse of the warm hearts under the rough, unattractive exteriors, and from this time forth she vowed to herself that she would think more of others beside Phil.

She had not realized before the change there had surely been in these girls. Now she mentally contrasted their appearance with that of the first day when she had begun her work among them. The waitresses then had worn calico or gingham aprons, or dingy white ones; some had gaping shoes, and others gaping dresses, where buttons were wanting. Several had had frowsy, uncared-for heads, and finger nails "in mourning." To-day every girl was neat and clean. All wore long, plain white aprons, — thanks to the supply which had appeared in the store after Grace's first visit to it, — and only one girl had missing shoe buttons. It was this one who, later that day, confided to Lizzie, "I don't b'lieve dirt ever sticks to Grace Boyd, an' I just wish it did n't stick to me; but anyhow, I can't help tryin' to be nice an' clean when I sit next her at the table; can you?"

"No; I can't, and I don't want to, either. I'm glad every single day that she ever came here," was Lizzie's emphatic response.

It was not long before Grace became a general favorite among the girls, and while she was glad to

have it so, yet occasionally even this had its disadvantages, for she wanted some time alone, and often it was difficult to secure any. If she slipped off to her room to rest or read, some girl was sure to follow her, and sometimes a dozen would gather there and sit about on the bed, and even on the floor; and Grace could not send them away when she felt that she might help them even a little. Yet she did not realize how great an influence she was gaining over them, and that just because, while she worked as hard as any of them, and lived the same life, she yet was so different — so totally different. It was n't beauty, — they admitted that, — Rose Snyder was far prettier. It was n't "style," though her plain dresses did somehow have a different air from even their best; but it was the atmosphere of daintiness and purity that surrounded her.

"It's funny, ain't it? — how you can't ever say things to her that you would n't mind saying to any other girl. What d'ye s'pose is the reason?" Sue Fraley asked Lizzie Burt, after the two had spent an hour in Grace's room, and Lizzie answered slowly:

"I know why I can't. It's because I can't bear to see the sorry look creep into her eyes."

So, day by day, Grace was gaining a stronger hold on these untrained girls; and even the boys felt something of her quiet influence, and were very careful of their words and actions before her.

In those first weeks of her stay at Hadley, it was a constant grief to Grace that she could see so little of

her brother. One hour in his cell at night was all that was allowed, and no one except the overseer was permitted to speak to the prisoners while they were at work outside. But now at last Phil was free from that terrible gang. Since that first day when he had been forced to work, he had made no more trouble about it. Night after night he went back to his cell so tired that often he would be sleeping heavily when the keeper admitted Grace after supper. She would never arouse him when she found him so; she would only sit silently there by his side, looking pitifully down upon him, and wondering what the future held for him.

But now Phil was on parole. He must still do the hardest kind of labor and still wear those dreadful striped clothes, but he was no longer under an overseer, and no longer cut off from intercourse with the other citizens. He made small use of his opportunities, however. As long as he was obliged to wear that dress, nothing could induce him to mingle with the others. He was displeased if Grace spoke to him before any one, though he never told her that it was because he could not bear to have the shadow of his disgrace fall upon her any more than was unavoidable. Often in these days he was impatient and irritable with her, but she guessed something of what he was suffering, and would not allow herself to resent his unkind words when she saw the expression in his eyes.

So September slipped away and October came.

Holidays were made at Hadley — Brother believed in holidays — but of them all none was celebrated more heartily and joyfully than the anniversary of Brother's birthday. It came in October, when all the woods were gorgeous in russet and red and gold. This year a committee of the citizens waited upon Brother a few days before, asking permission to make such arrangements as they chose — subject to the approval of one of the helpers. "Tongs" was the one they had selected as chairman of their committee. He was tall and thin, with a very small head — hence the nickname which the boys had given him. He answered to it as readily as to his real name, which was Green, and was ever ready to lend a helping hand whenever there was anything extra going on; and the citizens always "counted Tongs in" to all the good times.

Brother gave the desired permission to the committee, and many were the consultations that followed; but Brother himself was not allowed to know beforehand any of the plans. He saw groups of boys coming from the woods with great bags on their backs; he saw girls with their heads together in eager talk, but they separated or maintained a smiling silence when he passed by, and he asked no questions.

On the morning of the important day everybody — the laziest ones excepted — was early astir, and the joyous bustle of preparation began promptly. The shops were closed, and those who on other days worked therein were all pressed into service as helpers.

"You better all eat a good fat breakfast," Sue Fraley warned the boys, as she set the dishes of oatmeal on the table that she served, "for you'll have only a pick-up lunch at noon, and not a scrap more till half past seven."

"Oh my! Then I'll want a lot more oatmeal than this!" cried one of the smaller boys, beginning to eat as fast as he could.

"Look out, Bennie Ferris — if you gobble, —" cautioned the girl at his right, and Bennie frowned, but slackened speed.

"Wonder what they're putting on the bulletin," remarked Tom Sales, as the sound of pounding was heard without.

"Somethin' 'bout the celebration, 'course," returned Slocum, as he passed his bowl for another supply of oatmeal.

When breakfast was over a crowd gathered about the bulletin board. This was what they read there:

"All citizens of Hadley Junior Republic are requested to meet on Broadway at 8 o'clock sharp, and from there march to 'Home Sweet Home,' to give Brother a Happy New Year.

"BY ORDER OF THE COMMITTEE."

"Why, it's most eight now!" cried half a dozen voices.

"Of course 'tis," returned a member of the committee composedly, "so scurry about and round up the laggards and lazybones. There's Tootsie going to sound the call now."

The bugler was already on the green, and in a moment a joyous summons rang out — an imperative summons that everybody hastened to obey.

The line was formed on the great piazza: first, the cadets, in full uniform, — the president and cabinet and the judges; then the twenty girls and boys of the choir; next the committee; and after them all the citizens, two by two, with the helpers and the cooks bringing up the rear, — no, not quite that, either, for the two prison keepers came hurrying out with their charges, and even the almshouse keeper, with the four small paupers. The sight of that forlorn little quartette often brought the quick tears to Grace's eyes, and it did so now.

"They're so little and so wretched-looking, we ought to do something for them," she said impulsively to Kitty Hyde.

Kitty's glance followed Grace's gesture. "That's so; we ought," she returned. "Let's talk it over the first chance we get."

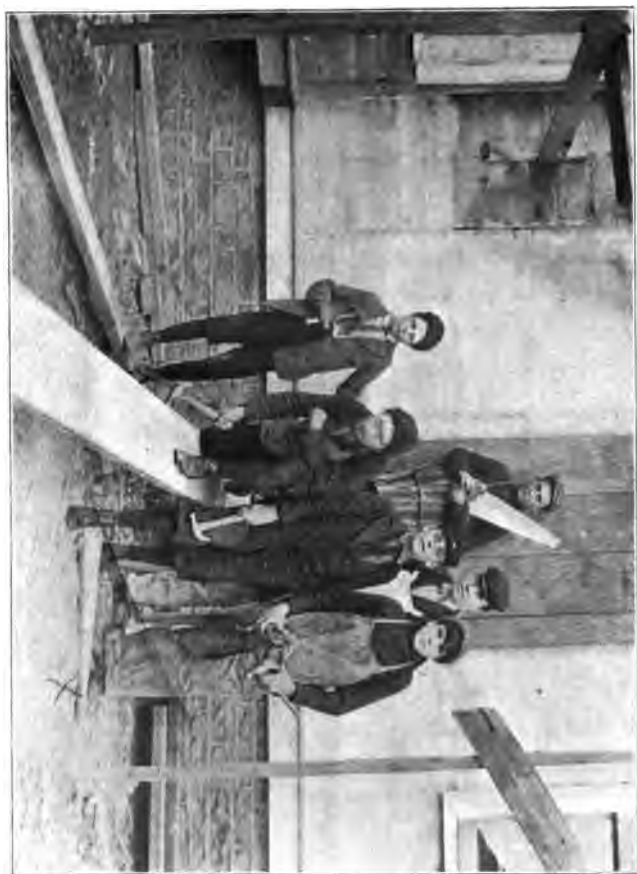
Grace nodded as the drum gave the signal and the column began to move across the green towards Brother's pretty yellow cottage, all singing as they marched. Brother came out on the piazza and stood, his wife at his side, awaiting them. When the song was ended, the president stepped forward and made a very short speech, expressing the love and good wishes of the citizens, one and all. Then Tongs, as chairman of the committee, formally invited Brother and the little mother to a birthday banquet

at the Grand at half past seven. Brother having thanked them for their good wishes and accepted their invitation, the citizens gave three cheers and a tiger for the "best big brother that ever was," and then the long line marched back singing the song of the republic.

There followed much scurrying hither and yon, and much merry talk and laughter, but there was plenty of hard work as well, for there were all the regular duties — dish-washing, bed-making, dairy and farm work — that must be done even on a holiday — and all the extra cleaning besides; for the dining-room floor must be swept and washed, and the whole length and breadth of Broadway subjected to the same processes.

"It's the first time I ever thought our Broadway was too big," one of the boys groaned, as he took his turn at mopping the board floor.

But after this came pleasanter work, when a strong force of girls and boys decorated the dining-room. They emptied the great bags of leaves that the boys had gathered, and fastened them in masses of green and red and gold on to a strip of white muslin long enough to reach entirely around the room. It was easy to stick the leaves on with a touch of glue, and it made such a beautiful frieze when the boys tacked the cloth around the walls. The mantelpiece was banked with ferns and goldenrod, and in each corner of the room stood tall green rushes with seal brown cat-tails, and bunches of plummy goldenrod and asters.



Then Grace brought out some curtains of dotted Swiss, that "somebody," she said, had sent her for just this occasion, and the boys put them up for her. Some of the boys had not been very much in favor of decorating the dining-room, but now, as they looked about, they were quite ready to admit that it was worth all the hard work to have it look like that — and the girls were quietly triumphant. They had known all along that it would be worth while — at least some of them had.

At half past eleven the work was about completed, but then it was time for work of another sort — the tables must be set for lunch.

"Say, boys, we're kind o' loafin' to-day—let's help the girls set the tables." It was Dan's suggestion, but the boys were quite ready to adopt it. So with fun and frolic intermingled the tables were quickly laid and the "dry lunch," as the boys styled it, set on.

"Fifteen minutes for refreshments!" called Kitty Hyde, merrily, when the meal was ready.

"Say — if that's all the time you're givin' us ye ain't goin' to spot us for eatin' fast, are ye?" one boy inquired anxiously, and his relief was great when he was informed that the inspection committee was not on duty on this occasion.

And afterwards, boys and girls together helped to clear the tables and wash and wipe the dishes; then the finishing touches were put to the decorations, and after that the boys and some of the girls

were dismissed with thanks leaving only the regular waitresses and the committee to arrange the tables for the banquet; and when this was done, the doors of the room were locked, and the time until half past seven spent in rest or pleasure by all except the cooks, who had some last duties to attend to later.

Grace, tired with the hard work and all the noisy, happy clamor, went to her room and threw herself down among her sofa pillows to rest. She was thinking over the plans for the evening and wishing sorrowfully that Phil could be there with her, when there came a low knock at her door.

"Who is it — I'm resting," she called, thinking it one of the girls.

"It's I, Grace."

"At the sound of that voice Grace fairly flew to the door and flung it open. Yes, it was Phil standing there — Phil in his own clothes and not in those hateful stripes. In an instant her arms were around his neck, and she was laughing through the happy tears that would run down her cheeks.

"Oh, Phil! *Phil*! I never *was* so glad!" she sobbed, her head on his shoulder. And Phil's eyes may have been a little dim too, for there was a queer tremble in his voice as he tried to speak carelessly.

"It's only for to-day, Grace, and it's just for your sake anyhow. Brother always pardons somebody on his birthday, they say, and he got the president to offer me a pardon, but —" Phil drew himself up proudly — "I would n't accept it."

"O Phil!" was all that Grace could say to that, but there were love and pride and understanding sympathy in her face and in her voice, and Phil was satisfied.

"Look here, Grace," he cried out, "I would n't tell you before, — I could n't tell you while I was over yonder," — he nodded in the direction of the jail, — "but I've learned something, I guess. Maybe I've found out a few things I did n't know before about myself, and I've 'turned over a new leaf,' as grandpa used to say. I've been ashamed, ashamed enough to hate myself, ever since you came here and went to work. I knew it was just for me you did it, and I knew what a horrid grind it must be for you, — right in so with such girls, — and, O Grace, I can't ever tell you how it was! It seemed as if a sullen demon got into me and kept me from doing what I knew all the time any decent fellow would have done. I did want to work, but — I don't know — it just seemed as if I *could n't* give in till that horrible day when they put the irons on me —"

Grace gave a little startled cry, and stood staring at him with a white, miserable face.

"O Phil — they did n't do that!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, they did. Did n't you know?" Phil's face flushed hot with remembrance of that past shame. "Well, 't was mighty good of 'em all not to let you know, but I wore them one week, and that ended it. *Oh!*" There was a world of shame and anger and misery in the exclamation.

"O. Phil!" Grace was looking at him now with wet eyes, "I'm so glad that I did n't know. It seems as if I never could have borne that!"

"'T was all right, — I deserved it." Phil put in quickly. "It broke down that ugly pride of mine — for good and all, I guess, and since then I've worked as steadily and well as I knew how, and I'm going to do my best to make up." He looked at his sister earnestly as he added: "It was *awful* good of you to come, Grace."

She leaned forward and laid her cheek softly against his. "Phil," she said, "I've been glad every minute since I came, in spite of everything. And now, — O Phil, to have you like this is worth ten times all the hard of it."

"Even though I've got to put on the stripes again to-morrow?" he questioned.

"Even though you are going to put on the stripes again to-morrow," she amended; then she added with a tender little laugh, "Phil, I foresee that I'm going to be very proud of my brother. You must n't let me spoil you."

His answering smile faded into an expression of grave resolve, quite new to his face.

"It has been mighty tough, Grace," he said slowly, "but," he drew himself up and threw back his shoulders, "I surely have found out that hard work is n't the worst thing in the world."

After a while Phil went off for a walk with Dan, who was scarcely less happy than Grace over the

change in him. Then Grace threw herself on the lounge once more, and lay there with happy eyes, thinking over what her brother had said, as she rested. When it was time to dress for the evening, she stood for a few moments looking thoughtfully at the few dresses that she had brought to Hadley; then she shook her head.

"So many of the girls have no best dresses," she said aloud, "so I'll just wear this old serge to keep them company. With fresh ribbons and a clean white apron I shall be dressed enough for a waiter girl." She laughed softly as she thought how some of her city friends would look if they could see her now, as she ran down to help get the supper on the tables.

On the hotel steps she found Jack Horner and little Tim Collins. As usual, Jack was barefooted and clad in blue overalls. He had his pet turtle tethered with a string, and his big blue eyes looked solemnly up at Grace from under his tousled curls. Tim's face and hands were streaked with dirt, and his small white toes were plainly visible through the broken shoes he wore.

Grace stopped and looked down at the pitiful little pair.

"Why Jack — Timmy — what's the matter?" she asked, laying her hand gently on Tim's fair head.

The child looked up at her, trying manfully to keep back the tears, but his lips quivered as he replied, "They say me'n Jacky can't go in to the bankit to-night, an' — an' we do want to so!" He

wiped his sleeve across his eyes, then added hastily, "I ain't a-goin' to cry, you know, 'cause I ain't a baby — I'm most six years old."

Jack Horner said nothing. He only continued to look solemnly up into the girl's face while two big tears rolled slowly down his cheeks, leaving streaks of white to mark their passage.

"An' — an' mebbe they're goin' to have i-i-ice-cream!" finished Timmy, gulping down a big sob as he stammered over the last words.

"Who said you could n't come to the banquet?" Grace inquired, a hand on the dark head as well as the fair one now.

"His gardeen. Jim Slocum's Jacky's gardeen — I ain't got any now. An' Jim said we can't go in — we got to jest have — have — supper in — the poor-house."

"Indeed you shan't — I don't care who says so!" cried Grace, impulsively. "Come with me — quick — and I'll fix you up a bit." She held out a hand to each and turned hastily back towards her room, but the next moment she slackened her pace for Timmy's sake. He looked up at her with shining eyes.

"You need n't to walk slow for me," he panted. "I can go real fast — see?"

He darted ahead, making his little crutch fly, but as he glanced back over his shoulder he did not see Phil and Dan coming around the corner of the building, and Dan caught him just in time to save him a bad tumble.

"Better look where you're going next time, Tim," Dan was saying, as Grace and Jack Horner came up.

"Go on upstairs, boys; I'll follow you in a minute," Grace said to the two children, while she stopped to tell in a few words how she had found the disconsolate little pair.

"It's a shame! Somebody ought to look after them little kids," Dan exclaimed. "I guess I'll have to take Jacky — Slocum's no good."

"Oh, will you?" cried Grace. "Then I'll try to find some one to be Tim's guardian. He's such a dear little fellow! But I must run now — I can see that their faces and hands are clean this time anyhow, and take them into the 'bankit,' as Tim calls it."

She ran up to her room, where she found the little boys waiting patiently at the door. Ten minutes later she led over to Broadway two little lads with clean, shining faces and nicely brushed hair.

"See that they keep clean till the doors are opened, won't you?" she said to Dan, as she slipped into the dining-room.

Phil flushed a little. "She might have asked me instead of Dan," he thought. "She never expects me to do anything decent! Come here, Tim," he added aloud.

Tim limped over to him, a grave look of wonder in his pretty blue eyes.

"How would I do for a guardian — eh?" Phil said in a low tone to the child.

Tim gazed at him critically, then glanced after

Dan, who was going off with Jack to put his turtle in a safe place for the night. He would much have preferred Dan for a guardian, but if he was going to take Jacky, as he had just said he was, of course he could n't take any other boy; and at least Phil was Grace's brother, and Tim's heart had gone out to Grace. He put his scrawny little hand into Phil's.

"I'd be ever so glad," he said in his pretty old-fashioned way, "an' I'll be real good."

"All right — we'll see about it," answered Phil; then his face began to burn as he remembered that a convict could not assume any such charge.

"But I'll get Grace to look out for him till I'm free," he decided. "I can't let Dan be ahead of me in everything." A few months before he would have scorned the suggestion that Dan could be ahead of him in anything.

It was almost dark now, but suddenly the electric lights gleamed out, illumining the golden foliage of the elms, and some of the boys made haste to light the Japanese lanterns that were hung along Broadway. Then all except the committee and the cooks and waiters fell into line on the green, many of the boys carrying the torchlights that were to see much service a little later; and so, singing of course — When did they not sing? — they went joyously across to Brother's cottage to escort him over to the banquet hall. He came out to meet them, and stood with his wife watching the picturesque column with its flaring lights, and listening to the young, happy voices

singing the songs they loved so well. Suddenly he leaned down and spoke to his wife.

"Little mother, I believe that I am the happiest man in the world," he said softly.

She had no opportunity to answer, for the song ceased and the eager, impatient young voices began to call out all sorts of merry summonses, and in a moment Brother and his wife were placed at the head of the column, and once more the song rose on the quiet air. When they reached Broadway the dining-room door stood wide open, and the committee, headed by the tall, lank figure of Tongs, was waiting to welcome the honored guests. Brother looked about the room with warm approval.

"It is beautiful!" he exclaimed, "and how you must have worked to do all this to-day!"

"It is the prettiest room I ever saw," added the gentle voice of the little mother, and those who had worked the hardest felt fully repaid then. They had all crowded in now, and there was a hubbub of talk and exclamations of admiration. But presently somebody cried out, "Oh, the table — the prize table!" and then everybody pressed forward towards the part of the room where the table stood, and a fresh buzz of admiring comment broke out. Few of those girls and boys had ever seen such a table as that. The others had the freshest of cloths and were decorated with bowls and vases of flowers; but this had a cloth of shining white damask, and the dishes were of thin white china, with hop vines in beautiful tints of pale

green and gray trailing over them, and the glasses were thin and beautiful, and the knives and forks and spoons were as handsome as if they had been solid silver instead of quadruple plate.

"Even a silver flower pot!" murmured one girl, with big round eyes of wondering admiration, as she gazed at the fern stand in the centre of the table.

"Who's a-goin' to eat at that table to-night?" questioned another quickly.

"Why, Brother, of course," was the instant response from a dozen voices, but now there were cries of "Hush!" "Be still there, can't ye!" "Listen to what Brother's a-sayin'!"

He was speaking about the prize table.

"This is a surprise to me as well as to most of you," he said, glancing at the table. "I did not know that it was to be here to-night, but as it is, you will all want to know who has won the prize for neatness and best table manners. To tell you my own private opinion — *I* think that you *all* deserve it; and I am very sure that the inspection committee has had a dreadfully hard time in reaching a decision. I'm glad I was not on that committee, and I am sure that you will all be satisfied with their award. The chairman of the committee will now announce the result."

The chairman was Kitty Hyde and she stepped forward at once.

"It *was* awfully hard to decide," she began, "and as Brother says, we wanted to give the prize to almost every table, but we couldn't do that, of

course, and anyway, you'll all have your turn, as those who have won can sit at this lovely table only one month — then the next best will take their places. We have decided that table 5 has, on the whole, the best record for the past six weeks."

There was a burst of generous applause from the others and a word of thanks from the president, who was the head of table 5; then, after a brief whispered conference with the other seven who sat at his table, the president spoke again.

"We lucky fives," he declared, "cannot sit at our handsome table to-night. Of course, nobody would think for a moment of letting Brother and our little mother have anything but the best we can offer them on this day — so of course they must sit at this table. You need n't shake your head, Brother, you've nothing to say about this — and we've found out from the committee that our table did n't have really the best record after all — the waiter girls beat us all hollow, only they were n't in it. I don't mean that for slang, you understand," he explained, in response to a ripple of laughter that ran over the room, "but they were n't trying for the prize. I think myself, that that's all the more reason it ought to go to them; but the committee has honored us, and of course we're mighty proud of it, only we've decided — *unanimously* decided — that the waiter girls are to sit at that table to-night."

"Oh, no, we can't! We've got to wait on the others!" cried one of the waiters,

"No, ma'am — beg your pardon — the committee of arrangements says 'no' to that; so, Brother, if you and the little mother will take your seats, we'll see that these six young ladies keep you company.

"But your aprons — the waiters in this room all wear white aprons," cried Sue Fraley. "Here, girls, off with your aprons and pass them to our substitutes!" she added with sudden inspiration.

It was done in a flash, and the six volunteer waiters were ready for duty.

"Is n't this *lovely*! And I know 't was you did it somehow," whispered Lizzie Burt, squeezing Grace's hand as they took their seats.

But now the waitresses came in with bowls of steaming oyster stew of which the hungry citizens made short work; and then followed great platters of cold turkey and ham, and fresh bread and butter — just as much as anybody wanted. And then two of the girls brought in a big tray on which was such a cake as never was seen before. It was certainly half a yard deep and as big round as a milk pan — a big milk pan — and covered all over top and sides with icing, and on the top were candles and candles and candles — "as thick as pins in a pin-cushion," one girl said.

Brother stared aghast at the huge cake as the girls set it on a small table at his side — it was so big that it had to have a table all to itself — and then another girl brought him a little burning taper to light the others with.

"*That's* easy," Brother laughed, as he lit, one by one, the pink and green and golden candles, "but however I'm to cut a cake of that size, I don't see — unless you bring me a saw. It must have been baked in a bushel basket."

"Oh, see, ain't it jest a beauty!" piped up little Tim's shrill treble, as the candles blazed into a glow of light.

One of the girls whispered a few words in Brother's ear, and he looked at the huge cake with a smile of relief.

"Oh — baked in sections, was it! So it's really three cakes, one on top of another. Oh, well, if that's all, I guess I can manage to cut a hundred or more slices out of it," and he flourished the Christy knife that another waiter had just put into his hand.

"O wait — you must blow out the candles first!" cried two of the girls in a breath.

"That's easy too," answered Brother merrily, and with one big breath the twinkling lights went out. It takes time, however, to carve out a hundred slices of cake, and before Brother's task was done a liberal portion of ice-cream had been placed before each guest, and some were waiting impatiently to "keep it from melting."

And after the cake and cream there were the fruit and nuts and candies to dispose of, and after *that* — every glass was filled with clear, cold water, and everybody stood to drink Brother's health.

"To the best man in the world — long life and every day a happy one!" cried Tongs, as he lifted his glass.

They drank the toast in a silence that was eloquent. Brother found his eyes suddenly dim as he looked about and met the glances of warm affection from those many young eyes. His voice was husky as he thanked them all for making this the very happiest birthday feast that he had ever had.

"Mr. Green made just one little mistake," he added: "he merely misplaced two words. He should have said, 'To the happiest man in the world, and every day a best one,' for nothing in this world makes me half so happy as to see all my boys and girls growing into good, true, happy men and women. God bless you, one and all!"

That was the end, for by this time little Tim and Jack Horner were nodding, and the curfew was ringing out its warning. Of course, the guests of the evening had to be escorted back to their cottage, and everybody had to stop there for a peep at the birthday gifts that some of the girls had made for Brother — gifts small in money value, but priceless in the love they expressed; and then the girls went back to clear the tables and wash the dishes and put the dining-room in order for breakfast.

"Mye-e-e! That was a supper 'n a half!" Tom Sales remarked to Dan, as they lingered on Broadway, for curfew was not binding on this great oc-

casian. "We never had a spread to hold a candle to that before except at Thanksgiving, and then we don't have such cake — nor ice-cream either. Who d'ye s'pose foots the bill for it? What we all chipped in would n't half pay for it."

Dan smiled as he answered, "Reckon Grace Boyd knows more about it than anybody else."

"Say — is it so, honest? Is her father a millionaire?" questioned another boy. "Phil used to brag about his father's money — when he first came — but I thought 't was jest his gas."

"No, it's true, I'm sure," Dan returned.

"Cracky! Then what makes him let those two stay in this place where they have to work jest like the rest of us?"

"Well, mebbe he thinks work ain't a bad thing," Dan replied, in his quiet fashion. He turned quickly as Jim Slocum lounged up the steps. "Look here, Jim, I want to speak to you," he said. "Come on over here, will you?"

"Well, what you want?" Slocum inquired, when Dan stopped, out of the hearing of the others.

"It's about little Horner. You're his guardian, ain't ye?"

"Wal', I was, but I'm sick of lookin' after him. It's no fun taggin' 'round after a kid like that," returned Slocum; then curiously, "Why?"

"Well, you need n't to bother about him any more," answered Dan. "I'll get 'em to turn him over to me."

“All right — more fool you! Guess you’ll get good an’ sick of your bargain ’fore long,” Slocum responded carelessly, and as he went back to the group on the piazza, he added to himself, “That Dennis is a softie some ways, but he ain’t soft on the diamond, an’ that’s a fact!”

CHAPTER XIII.

A BAD BARGAIN.

"GRACE, Grace Boyd, wait a minute! I want to speak to you."

Grace turned and waited for Kitty Hyde who was hurrying after her. She and Kitty had grown to be warm friends.

"Well, what now? Your eyes are fairly snapping, Kitty. What has somebody been saying or doing, to stir you up so?"

Kitty's cheeks were flushed and her voice was eager and excited.

"I'm cross — cross as two sticks, Grace. I think girls are just horrid, sometimes!"

"Thank you. Sorry I'm one ma'am, since you don't seem to approve of girls, but really I don't know how I can help it," returned Grace meekly, but with dancing eyes.

Kitty turned and gave her a little shake. "You know I didn't mean you!" she exclaimed; then she stopped short and gazed at Grace with a whimsical lift of her eyebrows. "I wonder, though, if I did mean you, after all," she added.

"What is it, Kit? I do believe you are really in

earnest. What have I—and the other dreadful girls—been doing?”

“That’s just the trouble. It is n’t what they have been doing—it’s what they won’t do, and I believe it’s half pure laziness and the other half ignorance.”

“Lazy and ignorant, am I? Anything else, ma’am?” Grace questioned demurely.

“*Grace!* You know well enough I was n’t thinking of you when I said that; but come up to my room, will you? I must talk it all over with you and find out where you stand.”

“Better come to my room,” Grace answered and I can sew while we talk. I’ve got a jacket to mend for my little Tim.’

“How you do love Timmy Collins,” Kitty said. “He is a dear little fellow, but I don’t see how you find time to do his mending with all the rest that you have to do.”

“Yes, I do love the little fellow, and it seems so pitiful that he has nobody in all the world to care for him,” returned Grace. “But he will have!” she added to herself.

She seated her friend in a nest of pillows on the couch, and brought out her own work-basket and Tim’s worn little jacket; then she laughed.

“Now, Kitty, relieve your burdened soul.”

Kitty straightway forgot all about little Tim and plunged into her story.

“It’s about the election, Grace. You know Tyler has n’t amounted to much as president. He’s a good

enough boy, but there is n't any 'go' to him; and anyhow, a president never has two terms here, and the election comes next month, you know."

"Yes. Who's the second candidate? Your brother is one is n't he?"

Kitty hesitated and flushed a little, then she looked up and spoke frankly.

"Grace, I can tell you, because — you won't mind now when your brother is doing so well — but — you can understand better than some girls could, about Rob. I worry about him, Grace. I can't help it."

"Why? I didn't know that you had any reason to," Grace answered, her eyes full of ready sympathy.

"Oh, well, of course Rob is n't like — like some of the boys here; but I don't ever feel quite sure of him. Perhaps I'm not fair to him — he says I'm not, but I mean to be." She hesitated, then hurried on, "I don't know how you feel about it, Grace, but I think the girls here ought to vote same as the boys."

"Oh, I would n't like to do that — would you?" Grace cried, shrinking a little.

Kitty looked at her mournfully. "That's just what I was afraid of. If a girl is nice, she holds off like that, and then, when there is a chance to vote, only the rough, ignorant girls, or the real bad ones, will do it; and so woman suffrage gets a bad name, and the girls lose their chance to do lots of things that they could do just as well as not — and help the republic no end!"

Grace was looking at her with thoughtful, earnest eyes.

"Tell me all about it, Kitty," she urged. "You see, I've never really thought much about woman suffrage. I've just taken it for granted that those who clamor for it are loud, coarse women, you know — the kind that don't want to stay at home and take care of their children."

"O Grace!" Kitty groaned, "*Don't* take all that for granted. I'm not talking about other places. Maybe there's no need of it where women have fathers and brothers and husbands to provide for them; and it's best for such women to just look after their homes and families. I'm not talking about such women or about other places; but here we girls have n't any fathers or husbands to look out for us. Most of the boys don't stop to think whether the laws they pass are best for the girls, if only they are what they themselves want; and some of the laws are real hard on the girls. Just think what it would mean — what we could do right here in Hadley Junior Republic, if all the girls would vote, and vote the right way — I mean, of course, for the real good of the republic. And then there's the principle of the thing. You remember the Boston Tea Party, don't you?"

Grace broke into a little laugh at that.

"Forgive me, Kitty dear, but you did look so tragic!" she cried. "Of course I remember the Boston Tea Party, but what has that to do with girls voting here?"

"Everything!" Kitty's foot tapped the floor impatiently. "It's the very same principle — taxation without representation, and it is n't *right!* You and I have to pay taxes same as the boys do, and we have to live under the laws of this republic, and we have no voice in the making of those laws."

The laugh died out of the other girl's eyes. "Yes, that's true," she assented soberly.

Kitty went on severely: "Don't you think that we ought to have a girl to judge some cases where girls are on trial?"

"Yes, indeed!" Grace cried quickly.

"Well," — Kitty's tone was triumphant now, — "lots of the girls think so, but the boys won't appoint one, because they say if they allow one of us to hold that office, it will be letting down the bars and we will try to get all the offices."

"And you think it would n't be so, Kitty?"

"I'm not troubling myself in the least about that," replied Kitty. "There are twice as many boys as girls here, and they have the matter in their own hands. They could vote us down even if we had suffrage."

"Well, then, what's the good of our having it?" questioned Grace, with a perplexed little frown wrinkling her forehead.

"Why, they *could* vote us down if they all voted against us, but they never would do that. Some of the boys are fair-minded enough to see the injustice of not letting us vote, — they would usually vote with

us, — and there are always a good many boys who cannot vote themselves, — prisoners and those, you know."

"But don't you think," Grace inquired hesitatingly, "are n't you afraid that some of the girls might vote on the wrong side, — for poor laws, I mean?"

"Some would, of course," Kitty admitted promptly, "but we'd just have to educate such girls up to a higher standard; and don't you see how good that would be for them? The boys would treat the girls better, too, if they had suffrage."

"But they always do treat us nicely now," Grace declared.

"Treat *you* nicely, — of course they do, and they better had!" Kitty declared laughingly; "but many of them are too rough with others of the girls, and some pay no attention to them anyway."

"But — I thought the girls did vote in town-meetings," Grace said, after thinking the matter over for a few minutes in silence.

"Yes, they do sometimes, but every once in a while some boy pops up and tells us we have no right to. We're going to vote at the town-meeting to-night, and if the boys make a fuss about it, we've an answer all ready for them." Kitty's eyes sparkled with some thought which she kept to herself.

Grace was carefully fitting a patch into Tim's small jacket sleeve, but her thoughts were not on her work.

"If I could vote, I'd see that little fellows like Tim had the right sort of guardians," she remarked

presently. "Think of that big lazy Jim Slocum abusing Jack Horner as he did. Jacky says he used to 'paddle' him most every day."

Kitty nodded yet more triumphantly. "There it is, you see! If we had the chance to vote we'd look out for things like that."

"I begin to think you're right, Kitty. It does seem as if we girls ought to have something to say about the laws we — and these little folks — have to live under," Grace admitted thoughtfully.

"I guess you'd have thought so if you'd been here last year when the government got awfully in debt and piled double taxes on to us girls to help 'em out."

"How was that? Tell me about it."

"Why, you know how we're all divided into trade classes here — farmers, carpenters, printers, and so on, for the boys, and cooks or waiters, dress-makers, milliners, and laundresses for the girls. Well, in the legislature were boys from each of their trades, but of course none from the girls', and they passed a bill requiring each trade to pay ten dollars into the treasury. Of course, that made it twice as heavy a tax on the girls as on the boys, because there were but half as many in each trade as the boys had; so the girls were awfully mad about it, and that's when some of us made up our minds that we ought to have suffrage, and we're going to keep working till we get it!"

Grace had listened with keen interest. "Why, I

see!" she exclaimed. "Of course that was unjust. And did you have to pay the double tax?"

Kitty laughed. "Indeed we did n't. We raised such a rumpus that the legislature had to repeal that law in a hurry and make a fairer one; but the principle is n't fair all the same — don't you see, Grace?"

"Yes, I do." Kitty's eyes brightened at the decided tone. "And I think that I shall join your suffrage party, but I won't *promise* till I've thought over it a day or two. You see I'm so apt to do things in a hurry and wish afterwards that I had n't, so I'm trying to train myself to think beforehand. But, Kitty, if the girls were so stirred up over that unjust tax, I should think they'd all want to vote."

"*Wouldn't* you think so!" exclaimed Kitty, springing up restlessly; "but girls *are* so provoking sometimes. And you know how some are here — they think of nothing but sitting around and talking about clothes, or gossiping about other girls — or about the boys. I get too cross for anything with them!"

"If we could only help such girls!" Grace said, more to herself than to Kitty, but Kitty answered briskly:

"You can't, and it's no use thinking about it. The only thing we can do is to get a majority of the best girls on our side and then these others will fall in, because they'll see that it's the winning side. Of course you're going to the town-meeting?"

"Yes; I think so."

"Do. I'll come for you, to make sure," Kitty

answered; then she stopped before one of the windows with a little cry of pleasure. "How lovely your window-boxes are. I never noticed them till this minute, I was so full of woman suffrage."

"Are n't they pretty?" Grace said. "Dan made the boxes for me, and Brother let me have the plants from his garden. The frost would have caught them by this time if I had n't taken them."

"I believe I'll get one of the carpenter boys to make me some boxes for my windows," Kitty answered. "Flowers do make such a difference to a room! But your room is lovely anyhow, Grace. It's as sweet and dainty as — you are yourself." She stooped and laid her cheek for a moment on Grace's soft brown hair, then turned towards the door. "I must go now," she added; "but remember that I'm coming for you to-night, and do please think real hard about the suffrage. I'm sure you can't help deciding that we ought to have it — here at Hadley."

The town hall was filling rapidly when Rose, Kitty, and Grace went in together that evening, but seats had been kept for them with the other girls, who were not scattered about as usual, but sat all together near the centre of the room. Often these town-meetings were somewhat dull and tedious, but to-night there was an eager buzz of conversation and an air of half-suppressed excitement and expectation that vividly recalled to the minds of the boys that other meeting where they had gained a victory of which they speedily repented.

Some minor business having been quickly disposed of, a bill was presented providing that no bill should be considered at any future town-meeting unless it had been, for at least three days before, posted on the bulletin board.

"That's a real good bill, girls — Kitty says, 'Let's all vote for it,'" was the word that was passed along the girls' seats. But many of the boys seemed to be of a different opinion. The discussion over the measure was long and excited, but the boys in favor appeared to be in the majority.

At last Kitty Hyde secured recognition from the chairman.

"That bill ought to pass!" she declared, in her positive fashion. "It would put an end to our making all sorts of silly laws just because somebody pushes them and we don't take time to think whether they are really good ones or not."

There was a burst of applause from the boys who favored the bill, but at once Rob Hyde rose, his dark face full of angry excitement. He had his own reasons for opposing that bill, and to have his sister favoring it was too much. His quick temper got the best of him, and he exclaimed sharply:

"What the girls think about this isn't of much consequence. They've no right to vote anyhow!"

That was throwing down the gauntlet emphatically.

Kitty's face flushed and for a moment she looked as if she were going to cry. It was so hard to seem to fight against Rob; but Kitty had thought long

and earnestly about this matter of girls' voting, and she was sure that she was right. The other girls were watching her curiously as she rose again, her steady, controlled voice in marked contrast to her brother's angry tone.

"Girls have been voting in these meetings — why can't they keep on doing so?" she asked quietly.

"They have — just because some of us were too soft to put a stop to it!" Rob flung back instantly. "But there's no law giving girls suffrage in this republic, and I, for one, don't believe in their meddling in politics."

"Very well," Kitty replied instantly, "if we've been voting when we had no right to, of course you'll have to repeal all the laws we've helped you make."

That was a poser. Rob stood for a moment gazing angrily across the room towards the girls, then he dropped silently into his seat. The chairman leaned over and whispered to the clerk, while Choate muttered in Hyde's ear:

"You cut off your own nose that time. Might have known that sister of yours would be sharp enough to think of that. She's got more sense in her little finger than you have in your whole carcass!"

Hyde scowled savagely at this Job's comforter. "You'd better go and try to talk her over then!" he snarled.

"That's exactly what I'm going to do!" retorted

Choate, and presently Kitty heard his smooth, low voice at her ear.

"You hit us hard, Miss Kitty," he began, "but I rather think we deserve it. Now see here — can't you and I agree on a compromise?"

Kitty looked at him suspiciously. Her confidence in Rufus Choate was small.

"Well, let's hear," she answered cautiously.

Choate went on in a tone of friendly confidence, under cover of some noisy interchanges of opinion among the boys:

"About this three-day bill now — I wish you would get the girls to let that fail. It will be lost, I'm pretty sure, if none of you girls vote for it, and the others will follow your lead, I know."

Kitty's face flushed again and her voice was strained as she answered stiffly:

"But you boys say that we've no right to vote anyhow."

Choate dismissed that with a careless lift of his eyebrows.

"Oh, it was just because Bob was mad that he said that — it will be all right, of course. I expect we'll be passing a woman suffrage bill before long." Choate's low voice grew more confidential as he added thoughtfully, "See here, is n't there a bill for a girl judge — that you're pushing?"

"Yes;" Kitty's tone was guarded.

"Well, now, just between you and me, what do you say to helping us down this three-day bill — just by



not voting on it, you understand? And in return, I'll promise you that your bill shall go through?"

"Oh, will you truly, Rufe?" Kitty's eyes were shining with delighted surprise. It was Choate's opposition that she had most feared.

"True as the world," he assured her, "and besides, it will be only putting off the three-day bill — it's almost sure to come up again soon and go through; only just now, for certain reasons, it seems to some of us better not to pass it."

"Well, then, if it's only putting it off for a little while, and if you'll *surely* give us the girl judge for the girls, —" Kitty began, yet hesitatingly, for there was a gleam in Choate's eyes that made her uneasy.

He interrupted her briskly:

"That's all fixed, then. Ever so much obliged, — do as much for you some other time," and before she could answer he was gone, leaving Kitty in a doubtful and half bewildered state of mind. But he seemed to have taken it for granted that she had really promised for herself and the other girls, so she reluctantly passed the word along to the others, and when the question was demanded, not a single girl voted, and the three-day bill was lost.

Choate kept his word, too, for when, later in the evening, the bill that Kitty had so much at heart came before the meeting, Rufe spoke for it so convincingly that it was passed, though by but a small majority.

He sought Kitty again when the meeting was over.

"Hope you're as well satisfied as I am," he said cheerfully.

"I — don't — know." Kitty's eyes were full of perplexity. "I've been wondering if we did right, after all. Is it right, Rufus, to bargain votes so?"

The look that flashed across his face she could not understand, but it increased her vague uneasiness.

"Don't worry your head over a little thing like that," he returned airily. "Of course it was all right, only" — he lowered his voice to a whisper — "it's just as well for you to keep dark about our bargain, for your sake quite as much as mine."

He laughed and passed on, leaving Kitty biting her lips angrily.

"I might have known better," she said to herself. "Kitty Hyde, if *ever* again you let that smooth-tongued boy-talk you over — but anyhow," she consoled herself, "we've got our judge and that's a good thing."

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE ELECTION WAS LOST.

IT was the next night that Grace, coming from the dining-room, heard shouts of laughter from a group on the lower end of Broadway, and saw a queer little figure come skipping down the long piazza. It was Pony King, also known as "Lazybones," because he managed to get along doing barely enough work to keep him out of the almshouse. Now he had on an extra large pair of blue overalls which he was pulling out at each side with thumb and forefinger as if they were the most voluminous of skirts, while over his round freckled face was tilted a big straw hat trimmed with great red roses and black feathers. He minced along with the gravest of faces, apparently deaf to the shouts of laughter that greeted him.

"Jest look a-there boys — would n't he kill ye?" shouted one big fellow, holding his sides with laughter.

The next moment the cook darted out of the dining-room door, and snatching her finery off Pony's head poured out on him a torrent of abuse which was belied by the twinkle in her eyes; for the small freckled face did look so funny under the

mass of millinery! However, for form's sake she boxed the boy's ears as she snatched off the hat and went grumbling back to her own domain; while Pony instantly inverted himself and proceeded down the piazza walking on his hands, his feet waving in the air. He prided himself on being able to walk in that fashion longer than any other boy at Hadley.

Jack Horner stood watching him with envious eyes, for he had tried in vain to follow Pony's example. Jack, as usual, had his turtle trailing behind him at the end of a string. Grace was often tempted to cut that string some night after bedtime, and let the long-suffering reptile escape from Jack's too affectionate care.

There were not many on Broadway to-night. Grace was wondering what had become of all the girls, when she saw Dora Street hurrying across the green, while from the cottage came Sue Fraley and half a dozen others.

"Come on, girls — Kitty wants you at the school-house, every one of you. Come, Grace, she wants you especially," Dora called.

"What's up?" Sue Fraley inquired carelessly, "Is it election business?"

"Yes, of course," returned Dora, briskly, as they all crossed over to the school-house. "There'll be nothing but election business for a month to come."

"I don't take much stock in it anyhow!" Sue declared. "I don't care who's president."

"Well, you ought to care, then!" Dora flashed

back over her shoulder. "Better not let Kitty hear you talk like that, or she 'll give you a lecture that 'll make your ears tingle."

"Oh, what's the odds 'long's you 're happy?" laughed Sue, lightly.

They had reached the school-house and Dora ran upstairs without reply. In the school-room they found Kitty, her face grave and earnest. Most of the other girls were already there when Dora came in with her contingent. As she glanced about the room, Grace noticed that the only girls not present were a few of the coarse, rough ones, those with whom she had found it the most difficult to be friendly.

Kitty Hyde's influence was very great in the republic, especially among the girls. She was older than most of them and had been there longer. Grace knew now that Brother was training her to be one of his assistants; but she claimed no authority over the others. She led — simply because she was more in earnest than most of them, and thought more deeply about the things that concerned their life at the republic.

As soon as the newcomers were seated, Kitty began to speak with a quiet earnestness that, momentarily at least, impressed even the most thoughtless.

"Girls, I've heard some of you say that you don't care whom we have for president or judge or anything, but you ought not to feel that way about the elections, — it is n't right. It does make a big difference to us girls whether our president and other

officers are real good boys or not. I do so want you all to care, and to use your influence to elect the best candidates. Then we can be sure of having good laws, — and you all know that we have some now that are not good.

“Now, as to the two presidential candidates — my brother you know, has decided to withdraw his name. I’m not going to say anything against Allen except to remind you that he has always opposed girls’ voting — but we all know that Will Gardiner is one of the best boys in this republic. He has always favored bills for the good of us girls; and you know that his party — the Good Government party — has put a woman suffrage plank in its platform.”

“The other party did that last year and then went back on us after the election,” interrupted one girl.

“Yes, I know. Political parties in Hadley are a great deal like bigger ones outside, I guess, and don’t always keep their promises,” Kitty answered, “and that is the very reason that I want to make sure of our suffrage *now* — and not trust to party promises. We’ll never have a better chance to secure it. You see how it is — the boys are so evenly divided between the Good Government party and the Labor party, that it’s bound to be an awfully close fight this year. They’ll try to coax over the younger boys — both sides will, I mean — and get a majority so. But don’t you see — if we could vote legally — not the way we’ve been doing, just because the boys let us when there’s no law to make it our right — but legally,

we could carry the election easily? How many of you girls would vote for Will Gardiner, if you could?"

About two thirds of the girls raised their hands instantly.

"And how many for Harry Allen?"

A few hands went up promptly, one or two somewhat doubtfully. Several of the girls were evidently undecided — not quite ready to vote either way.

Kitty nodded. "That's about as I thought it would be," she said. "Now, girls, you *do* see how much better for us it would be if we could vote, don't you?" Her tone was eager, almost imploring.

Katie Sullivan's coarse, heavy voice made answer:

"Lots o' the boys say that 't ain't ladylike for girls to vote," she declared.

A little stir of laughter and movement followed that. For big, untidy Katie Sullivan to say that struck some of the girls as funny.

But Kitty was in dead earnest and she did not laugh. She answered gravely, "Katie, I'm sure we can be just as ladylike in our voting as in anything else, and I don't think we've any *right* not to vote, if we can. If we don't care about it for ourselves, we ought to think of others, — of the little girls, and the little boys, too, like Timmy Collins. If we had a hand in the making of the laws we'd see that the little ones were looked after better, and — oh, there are lots of things. You can guess what boys will be cabinet officers if Harry is president. I tell you, girls, we should have to suffer!"

"Harry Allen says his party is goin' to let girls vote if they want ter!" Katie Sullivan asserted in a defiant tone.

"But, Katie, we *can't* trust to any such promises. Girls — won't you all back me up in this? As many of you as will sign a petition for woman suffrage in the Hadley Junior Republic, please stand."

Kitty looked over the room, and her eyes flashed with surprise and satisfaction as she saw Grace quietly rise. The other girls saw her too, and there was an instant's pause of astonishment; then one after another the girls followed suit, until all were standing except Katie Sullivan.

Suddenly Kitty was seen to dab her eyes with her handkerchief.

"I'm crying just because I'm so glad, you blessed girls!" she exclaimed. "This is better than I dared to hope. I'll get that petition ready to-morrow, and you must all try to get the other girls to join us. I'm sure you'll every one of you be glad enough before next year is over — if only we can put the bill through."

She dismissed the meeting then, giving Grace's hand a quick, grateful squeeze as she hurried past her to stop Katie Sullivan and try to coax her over; but Katie obstinately refused to sign any such petition, and flung down the stairs with a derisive laugh.

"It's because Harry Allen goes with her so much," Kitty sighed as she went back to Grace. "Oh, but I was glad to see you stand, Gracie!"

"I've been thinking about it, as I told you I would, and it seems to me right — here," Grace replied quietly.

"Yes, there's no question about it here, as you say, and we need not trouble ourselves now about how it is in the big world outside of Hadley," Kitty answered. "Now I am going to have a talk with Dan. He's strong for woman suffrage, here."

"Yes, I know — I've been talking with him about it. My brother opposed it at first, but I think Dan has about converted him."

"Dan is n't one of the showy, jolly sort of boys, but I believe everybody in the republic likes him," Kitty said.

"No, he's very quiet, but somehow you always feel sure of Dan. He never disappoints you," Grace returned. "I know Phil likes him better than any other boy here."

Kitty nodded in silence. She remembered how faithfully Dan had stood by Phil before his sister came, and when he had no other friend; and she said to herself that Phil Boyd would be a pretty mean fellow if he was n't nice to Dan now.

They were crossing the green towards Broadway, and Kitty exclaimed in a low tone, "Look at Dan now. How that little Jack Horner does worship him!"

"Yes," Grace said softly. Dan was sitting on one of the benches talking with three or four of the older boys, and Jack — his turtle carefully turned upside down for safe keeping — was sitting on the

floor, his curly head snuggled affectionately against Dan's knee, and his big earnest eyes watching the faces of the others as they talked.

"I wonder what they are trying to get Dan to do," Kitty exclaimed with quick interest. "There's Harry Allen, and Sales and Meeker — all Labor boys. Grace — I do believe they're trying to get Dan to join them."

"Don't you worry — he won't," Grace declared serenely.

"How do you know he won't? They may offer him a police commissionership. All the boys like to be police commissioners, you know — they have so much power."

"Dan would make a good one, Kitty."

"Of course he would, splendid — but I hope he won't join them. We can't spare a boy like Dan," Kitty added, with a lingering glance over her shoulder as they passed on towards the girls' building.

Dan, in fact, was tempted just then. Under his quiet, almost stolid manner, a strong ambition had sprung into life in his mind. He saw other boys holding high office in the republic, and he told himself that he could do just as well as they if only he had the chance; but he could n't have the chance just because he had n't been to school as much as these boys had. Dan did not like to study. An hour in the school-room wearied him more than a whole day in the shop; but it was usually the boys who stood high in their classes who got the high

offices — Dan saw that. A boy who was just beginning grammar and history — and who could n't yet write a decent letter — would never have a chance to be president or attorney-general or judge. He might be a policeman, — many of the boys were eager to be policemen, — “cops,” as they called them, — but that did not suit Dan's ideas. Now, however, a chance had come all unexpectedly, for here were Allen and the others offering to make him police commissioner if he would work for Allen's election. It was a temptation certainly. He did n't like Allen — did n't believe he would make half as good a president as Will would. Ah, Will! the thought of him put a new face on the matter. As if he could work against his good friend just for the sake of being police commissioner! And to think of deserting his party, too, — the party that stood for the best things for Hadley! Dan colored hotly as these thoughts flashed through his mind, while Allen and his friends were bringing forth one argument after another to convince him that it was greatly to his interest to join the ranks of the Labor party.

But now Dan shook his head decidedly.

“It's no use, boys,” he said. “I can't go back on the party, nor on Will, either. He's been a mighty good friend to me, an' I'd be meaner'n dirt if I should switch 'round to your party now just because you're willin' to buy me with an office. It's no go!” There was no wavering now.

For a while longer the boys argued and coaxed,

but seeing that they were making no impression, they gave it up at last, Allen throwing back a last wrathful threat over his shoulder as he departed :

"If ever you're up for office, Dennis, we'll remember this and pay you back—good!"

"Guess there ain't much danger of me being up for office," Dan answered, undisturbed. "Come, Jacky, it's time that you and Dan Junior went to roost." "Dan Junior" was the turtle's name just at present. He had borne many names since he was so unfortunate as to fall into Jack's clinging fingers.

The next day all was excitement at Hadley. On the bulletin board was the quite unnecessary information that there would be a torch-light procession of the Labor party at eight o'clock that evening, and the small boys who were to form a part of it—and few were the small boys who were not—were so eager over it that lessons and work suffered in consequence.

Long before eight, Broadway was thronged with girls and with the older boys of the G. G. party, all curious to see what the Labor party had gotten up by way of novelty.

The procession formed at the armory, which was in the basement of one of the large buildings, and the line of march was past the Grand Hotel, around the green, then over to Brother's cottage and back past the hotel; and since for lack of spectators the route could not well be extended, it was the custom to go over it twice and sometimes three or four times—if the enthusiasm warranted.

"They do look pretty, don't they?" Grace remarked to Kitty as the line began to move. To make it more effective, the electric lights had been put out, and when the procession started, those on Broadway could see nothing but a long double row of torches bobbing along in the darkness. As the line drew nearer, the dark figures of the torch-bearers came into view, the flaring lights bringing out vividly sometimes one face and sometimes another, with a strange, fantastic effect. The "band" was limited to a bugler and a drummer, but both made as much noise as they possibly could, and the small boys were not sparing of shrill cheers and shouts. Along the line among the torches were transparencies with the party watchwords, —

"NOTHING WITHOUT LABOR."

"THE PEOPLE'S PARTY."

"FOR THE GOOD OF THE MANY."

and finally,

"OMNIA VINCIT LABOR."

The old frayed Stars and Stripes waved proudly at the head of the column, and beside it a new flag of the republic that Katie Sullivan and the other Labor party girls had made and presented for use at this time.

"Make a pretty good show, don't they?" Dan said, and Hodge answered with an air of condescension:

"Oh, fair; but we'll make them feel like small potatoes when our show comes out!"

Two nights later "our show" came out, and sad to say, the same small boys who had shouted with the Labor party were this time in the ranks of the friends of Good Government, and cheered as often and as loudly as they had done before. This time the illuminations were not confined to torches, but every boy who had no torch to carry bore on his head or in his hands a grinning pumpkin jack'-o'-lantern; and, as the boys had cut the faces in the pumpkins, each according to his own ideas of the fitness of things, the result was weird and grotesque in the extreme. A big boy marched along holding aloft a huge round pumpkin looking like a threatening giant with its fiery eyes and grinning mouth, and after him came another boy with three little pumpkin heads set in a row on a stick, and one had a down-drooping mouth and fiery tears falling down its yellow cheeks, and another had a mouth that stretched from side to side and showed two rows of jagged teeth. Last of all walked a huge figure towering above all the rest—a figure draped in a long white sheet and surmounted by a very gorgon of a pumpkin head, with big round spectacles above the glowing eyes, and great ears flapping as it moved. This was labelled

"BAD GOVERNMENT ON THE WAY TO THE SCAFFOLD,"

and the march ended at a rough scaffold, around which the procession circled with hoots and groans

and cat calls, while the sheeted figure was hung by the neck till its pumpkin head suddenly dropped from its wooden shoulders.

The political interest and excitement grew as the days went by. Every evening there would be one or more stump speeches in different parts of the grounds, and the party leaders were untiring in their efforts to win over doubtful or uncertain ones.

The November town-meeting was thronged, and by this time everybody understood that woman suffrage was the momentous question of the hour. The Good Government party was openly in favor of it; would the others oppose, or would they yield to necessity, and let the bill pass at this meeting? They yielded with what grace they could, for the margin was too small to take any chances, and Kitty and her followers retired that night rejoicing, while the Good Government leaders began to feel that the strain was over. With so many of the girls on their side, they could not fail to carry the election; so they relaxed their watchfulness, and only laughed when they saw one and another of the smaller boys "scooped in," as they put it, by the opposition.

"Let 'em have the kids if they want 'em. They won't count for much against our girls," one of the boys remarked magnanimously. "The girls won't go back on us."

No, the girls — except the half dozen or so who followed Katie Sullivan — for once stood solid. They were proud to be in the party to which Kitty, Grace,

and Rose Snyder, and "all the nicest girls," belonged.

"We'll go in in great shape!" Dan assured Kitty, a few days before the election. "We've got more 'n half the boys pledged to vote for Will — besides you girls. Oh, it'll be a reg'lar walk-over!"

Kitty looked at him rather soberly. "It does n't seem as if there could possibly be any slip," she admitted, "but I sha n't feel real easy until it's over — the election, I mean."

"Ain't none of the girls goin' back on us?" Dan questioned, his confident smile fading as he spoke.

"No indeed, the girls are all right — sure!" Kitty asserted positively.

"Well, then, what could happen?"

"Nothing, probably — it's only that I never like to feel so sure beforehand. There are always chances, you know."

"Not this time," Dan returned positively. "In two days more you'll see."

Two days later, at half past six in the morning, Jack Horner was pounding noisily on Kitty's door, and when she opened it he bawled excitedly:

"Dan says to come down to Broadway *quick!* He says *quick!*"

"What is it? What's the matter, Jacky?"

"I dunno. He only said to come quick!" and Jacky's short legs flew down the hall.

Kitty hurried on her clothes and ran down to Broadway where she found a gloomy group of boys

gathered about Will Gardiner — all talking in angry, excited voices. Dan hurried to meet her and began, without waiting for her questions:

“It’s all up! We’ve lost the election.”

“O *Dan!* How?”

Dan ground his teeth savagely. Kitty had never seen him look so angry before.

“It’s all that beast of a Jo Meade!” he exclaimed. “He got a whole raft of the boys to go down to Lebanon with him, to the show, last night. They slipped off while Allen and his crowd were “stumping,” and Jones spotted ’em when they came crawlin’ home after twelve o’clock.” Jones was the night watchman.

“*Oh!*” — Kitty’s face rivalled Dan’s as she realized the results of this ill-timed night escapade, — “and now they’re under arrest?”

Dan nodded. Just then words seemed inadequate to express his feelings.

“And so of course they can’t vote.” Kitty’s voice was mournful. “How many of them went, Dan?”

“Oh, a whole crowd — fifteen, I b’lieve.”

Kitty made a swift, silent calculation.

“Dan” — she spoke eagerly — “it will be awfully close, but it seems to me we have a chance yet. There are sixty boys old enough to vote, and the Labor party has thirty-five of them, and I suppose Katie Sullivan will carry five girls beside herself to that side. That makes forty-one. We have thirty

boys — fifteen besides those who went off last night — and twenty five girls. That's forty. Now we must take out the other convicts — do you know just how many there are?"

In Dan's eyes a gleam of hope was dawning.

"I'll find out," he said, and went off on the run. In a few minutes he was back, flushed and eager.

"Six in jail — three Labor, three G. G.," he reported breathlessly.

"So they don't count either way, and it's so with the two girls in prison. Well, then, Dan, if we can get two votes — only two, Dan — we can win yet. Oh, *can't* we get just two more votes?"

Dan shook his head doubtfully, and dashed off to consult with the other boys. That day witnessed a wonderful change in the spirits of the Labor party.

"We'll win sure, now!" they declared jubilantly, and one added, "Tell ye what — we must give a supper to those fifteen G. G.'s who were so kind as to get locked up for our benefit." It was Choate who spoke, and the wink with which Tom Sales responded indicated that there was something under it all not yet made public. Dan, standing by, wondered about that look and laugh of Choate's — wondered, too, as he had done many times that day, where Jo Meade had gotten those tickets for the show. If it could only be proved — but of course it couldn't. Dan put his hands in his pockets and walked off with a very serious face.

All the same, up to the very minute of the opening

of the polls, Dan and all the other G. G.'s worked for those two much-wanted votes, but all in vain. The other side kept vigilant watch and ward over all doubtful citizens, and gave the G. G.'s no chance to win them over. One unexpected vote, indeed, the Good Government party was able to count, for when Grace came to cast her ballot her brother was at her side. His sentence expired that day, and at last he could hold up his head, unashamed. He voted for Will, but one more could not be found, and so, instead of the overwhelming victory on which they had so confidently counted, the G. G.'s found themselves defeated by a single vote; and that evening most of them sat with gloomy faces on Broadway, listening to the sounds of merriment from the dining-room, where the victorious party was celebrating its triumph.

In the girls' sitting-room Kitty Hyde was trying to console herself and her friends by the reminder, "We've got our right to vote, anyhow, and we'll surely need it, with Allen and his crowd in power."

CHAPTER XV.

A WEARY TRAMP.

THE political excitement died away rapidly after the election was over, but it was long before the unfortunate fifteen who had been the cause of its defeat were forgiven by their friends in the Good Government party. It was only when Kitty Hyde shrewdly suggested to the leaders that these boys would be likely to drift over to the other party if they were cold-shouldered too severely by their own, that their costly escapade was permitted to drop into the obscurity of the past.

Good friends of the little republic took care that there should be a supply of turkey and mince pies for the great feast day of the year, and there was enough and to spare; but as "no pauperism" is one of the watchwords at Hadley, two or three of the lazy boys who always lived from hand to mouth found themselves on Thanksgiving morning with empty pockets; and that meant work, or no dinner.

It was pretty hard, they thought, to have to work to earn the money for a dinner when everybody else was having a holiday; but on the other hand, it was simply dreadful to think of going dinnerless, with the



smell of roast turkey and vegetables and gravy making the air itself almost rich enough to eat. So with doleful faces and dragging feet, the moneyless boys sought out the "odd job man" who sent them to assist the farmers in the big barn.

Jack Horner and Timmy Collins raced up and down the great piazza, shouting over and over, "We're a-goin' to have turkey — turkey — t-u-r-r-k-e-y!" till they were so hungry that they could hardly wait for dinner time.

Then in the evening, when the big dinner was a thing of the past, Brother went down to the great clean barn that had been swept and made ready, and there everybody played games and sung till bedtime.

Then came December with its snow and ice, and there were more merry times at Hadley, with coasting and skating and glorious snowball battles; but though there was plenty of play, the work too went on steadily in house and shop.

Dan was in the first class of assistant carpenters now. He was beginning to study draughting — to learn how to make plans and estimates. Phil had chosen to go into the printing office. He had had a small printing-press of his own at home, and knew how to set type, so he did not have to begin quite at the bottom. He did not love work yet — perhaps he never would — but he knew that he must do it, and he was trying to do it as well as he could. It was so good to be free from that dreadful gang and the prison life, that, by comparison, the steady work in the little printing

office seemed really pleasant to him. Boys over sixteen were not obliged to go to school at Hadley, and Phil did not go, but he began quietly to study the constitution of the republic, and then the constitution of the United States, and the State laws, and so by slow degrees to dip regularly into many of the law books in the library. He was much interested too in the "New Republic," a little paper published monthly, and to which any citizen who chose could contribute. As his interest in his work grew, the sullen moodiness of the last months began to fall away from Phil, and Grace rejoiced to see his face regaining its old brightness, and to hear his blithe whistle breaking out now and then.

As to Dan — by this time his devotion to Phil was second only to his devotion to Phil's sister. These were happy days for Dan — the happiest he had ever known. He delighted in his work — even the clean, pungent smell of the shavings was a pleasure to him. He often worked over hours making book-shelves, or window-boxes, or brackets, which many of the girls were glad to buy for their rooms. It made him happy, too, to have little Jack trotting around after him. He liked to have the child's fingers slip softly into his every now and then. He watched over Jacky as if he had been his little brother, but he made him live up to the Hadley rule and work for his living. Jack became the little errand boy for the carpenter shop, and proud enough he was of his position.

Phil had kept his self-made promise also in regard to little Tim Collins. He did not love Timmy as Dan loved Jack, but he was sorry for the little fellow, lame and delicate and forlorn as he was; and perhaps he was influenced more than he realized by that feeling that he could not let Dan get too far ahead of him. He applied for the guardianship of little Tim, and he shared the care of the child with Grace, who never let Tim lack for love. So the two "babies" of the republic had fallen into good hands, and the almshouse knew them no more.

It would take too long to tell of that Christmas at Hadley. There never had been one like it before; perhaps there never will be one to equal it, for Grace was right there with her big, loving heart, and her eyes ever open to the needs of these boys and girls; and her father with his ample means was but too glad to send anything and everything that she suggested; so it was no wonder that, with all this, and with Phil and Dan to help her carry out her plans—that was a never-to-be-forgotten Christmas for the Hadley citizens.

And after Christmas, if Grace found the working hours sometimes very long and wearisome—as she surely did—she looked at these other girls, and remembering that *all* their life must probably be like this, only harder, she was ashamed to give up and say that she could not endure it for a few short months. The boys chose the work they liked best and did not change unless they wished to do so, but

it was different with the girls. They worked two or three months in each department; and so, in November, Grace went into the dressmaking class, and learned to cut and fit and sew, and run the machine. She did not like the work. The confinement in the close room, with the noisy chatter of the girls and the whirring of the sewing machines, wearied her greatly, but she made no complaint. She was determined not to shirk anything. The girls were not obliged to work in the laundry if they had money enough to pay for their own washing, but Grace made up her mind that she would know something about that work too. She did not say anything to Phil about it — she knew that he would be vexed and say that she had no business to attempt that.

One cold winter morning she was busy in the laundry with two of the larger girls scrubbing beside her. A little black girl and a boy of the same color were turning the washing machines, and two other girls were using the wringers. Somebody started a song and others joined in, singing to an accompaniment of knuckles on the scrubbing boards, and heels on the floor. Grace was tired, but she smiled as the chorus rang out merrily; then she turned in quick dismay as she heard her name spoken sharply and saw her brother standing in the doorway gazing incredulously at her.

“Grace! What do you *mean* doing such work as that!” he exclaimed.

“Oh”—Grace stammered confusedly, “it’s—it’s nothing, Phil. All the girls do it.”

"Come out here!" Phil commanded, stepping back into the hall.

"You needn't to come back, Grace. I'll finish up your things with mine." It was Sue Fraley who called this after her, and Grace, looking back, answered gratefully:

"Thank you ever so much, Sue — I'll be glad if you will."

In the hall Phil stood waiting with a frown on his face.

"Why do you let those coarse, rough girls call out to you so, as if you were one of them?" he began.

But Grace answered him gravely: "Phil, I felt that way when I first came here, but I've grown to really like these girls, almost every one of them. Some are rough, I know, but I should have been just as rough, I suppose, if I'd lived as they have had to, and they are kind-hearted. It was ever so kind of Sue, now, to offer to wash my things."

Phil let that pass and took up the other point.

"You know well enough, Grace, that father would n't let you do such work if he knew. You *know* he would n't!"

"Perhaps he would n't. I have n't been doing it until just lately, but I wanted to live for a little while as nearly as possible as these other girls live; and then I can understand better how they feel about things — and know better how to help them, Phil."

She ended with a touch of appeal in her voice. She did so want Phil to understand and sympathize,

and she was so afraid that he would not. There was no sympathy in his voice as he answered decidedly: "That's all nonsense, and you've just got to stop it!"

And then — for Grace was overtired that day, and not as quick to control her tongue as she would otherwise have been — she flushed resentfully at his masterful tone, and answered coldly:

"I shall do as I please about it, Phil, and you've no business to speak to me like that."

The next instant Phil had whirled around and was stalking across the snow-covered green, and Grace was standing alone, gazing ruefully after him.

"I don't care — he *has n't* any right to speak to me so!" she declared aloud, as with flushed cheeks she stood — half-inclined to go back and finish the washing. But she was so tired, and besides, she had felt instinctively that it was a good thing to let Sue do her a kindness — it would make her feel kindly too, and so give her — Grace — a chance to help somehow in return. So she walked slowly on, and went to her room.

"I wonder what Phil wanted of me," she thought. "He never came to the laundry before, and I don't see how he knew I was there. And I need n't have been so cross to him" — her face softened now — "I should have been sorry if he had been willing to see me do such work. I'll write him a note."

So presently Timmy carried a contrite affectionate little note over to the printing office, but the scrap of paper he brought back bore only these words:

"Will you *promise* never to do that kind of work again?"

The curt, hard response to her advance stirred Grace anew to anger. Without giving herself time to think, she wrote, "I will not!" and sent that over to Phil. After that she sat down and repented again, and promised herself that she would make it up with her brother that evening.

But Phil did not come near her that evening, and his only reply to another note that she sent him was, "When do you expect to play 'wash-lady' again?"

To this she returned answer, "Next Monday, of course," and both of them went to bed with a little ache in their hearts. But the next day Phil was pleasant and made no reference to the matter, and Grace was glad enough to let it end so.

"And I really won't ever work in that laundry again after next week," she told herself; then added aloud: "Grace Boyd, what a stubborn little wretch you are, not to give in this week instead of next," but she did n't give in, all the same.

The next Monday she was a little late in getting to the laundry, and when she entered she went straight to one of the tubs without glancing about the room.

"Where is the so —" she began, turning to the girl at the next tub; then she stopped abruptly and stood staring at Phil, who, his coat off and his sleeves rolled up, was gravely turning one of the washing machines.

"Why, Phil *Boyd!*" she exclaimed.

Phil looked at her without the shadow of a smile. The other girls in the laundry stopped their work and gazed from one to the other, uncertain whether this was a frolic or a quarrel.

"O Phil — please — don't," Grace said, with a nervous break in her voice, and then she turned and picked up her bundle of linen and walked hastily out of the room. Phil overtook her speedily, pulling on his coat as he ran.

"Well," he began, trying to get a glimpse of her face, which she kept turned away from him, "what's 'sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander,' is n't it? Some of the boys wash their own clothes. Why should n't I — if my sister does hers?"

Grace suddenly turned towards him her face, in which tears and laughter were struggling for the mastery.

"Because — because you would n't get them *half clean!*" she sobbed hysterically. "And Phil dear — I'll be good — I promise."

Phil drew a long breath and let the laugh creep into his eyes.

"I'm mighty glad," he said. "I hated the business like fury, but I'd have stuck to it if you had."

And somehow this little battle of wills did more than anything else to put the brother and sister back on the old cordial footing. It made Grace happy to have Phil looking out for her so, and it gave him a feeling of responsibility for her that made

him more manly. He whistled cheerfully over his work that day, and when, at four o'clock, he left the office, it was to hurry over and ask permission to go skating on the river. Brother gave permission readily, and Phil dashed across the green to his room, for his skates. As he came out with them he saw Dan driving out of the barn, and called to him :

"Hello, Dan, where you bound?"

"To the village, for Brother."

"Take a passenger?" Phil asked, and without waiting for a reply he sprang into the carriage.

When they stopped at the office Brother came to the door with a paper in his hand.

"I want you to send this telegram, Dan, and wait for the answer. You understand — I want the answer as soon as possible!"

"Yes, sir; I understand," the boy replied as he tucked into an inside pocket the bill that Mr. Carter handed him.

As the boys drove on, Dan said, "Going skating, ain't you?" his eyes resting on the skate bag slung over Phil's shoulder.

"Yes; it's prime weather for it, and Sales says the river was in splendid shape yesterday."

"I guess so. Wish I was goin' with you," Dan returned.

"Wish you were. Look here — you've got to wait for the answer to that telegram — why not go back and get your skates? 'T won't delay you ten minutes."

Involuntarily Dan slowed up—he did so want to go with Phil—then he shook his head. “No, Brother said he wanted the answer as soon as he could get it. Come up, Nellie!” he added to the horse.

When they reached the village, Phil sprang out and hurried across to the river, while Dan went straight to the telegraph office. The operator sent off the message, and the boy inquired how long before the answer would be received.

“About three quarters of an hour,” the man replied, glancing at the clock. “Maybe a little longer. You might come back in a hour.”

Dan drove over to the shed and tied the horse there; then he ran across to the river. It was a gay sight, for there were many young people on the ice, and the air was full of merry shouts and laughter. Phil was skimming along by himself, his hands in his pockets. Dan watched him longingly. Pretty soon a group of village boys came along, and one of them called out, “Hello, Dan; why ain’t you on the ice?”

“’Cause my skates happen to be two miles away from here,” laughed Dan.

“Too bad; it’s tiptop skating to-day. I wish I could stay longer, but I’ve got to go home now.”

As he spoke, the boy sat down on the bank and began to unbuckle his skates. As he stood up and swung them around his neck, he glanced again at Dan.

“Say, Dennis,” he called, “Don’t you want to use

my skates for a while? You can give 'em to Tom when you're through."

Dan's face lighted with quick pleasure. "That's awful good of you, Fred," he answered. "I was just aching to get on that ice."

"All right!" and Fred Baker handed over the skates and went off whistling. In three minutes Dan was skimming down the river after Phil. He caught up with him and laughed at his look of surprise.

"Hello! How's this?" Phil inquired, and when Dan explained, he said contentedly, "That's fine! I've been wishing you were along. Come on now — race you to the bend."

"Hold on a minute, Phil; see what time 't is first. I must be back by the time the answer to that telegram gets in — say forty minutes from now."

Phil looked at his watch. "That's all right," he returned. "I'll see that you're not late — we've loads of time. Now!" and off they flew.

There was time to go far beyond the bend and back again, and for some figure-cutting, too, before Phil's watch warned Dan that his sport was over.

"It's been jolly fun, anyhow," he declared, as he pulled off the borrowed skates. "Now, where's that Tom Baker, I wonder."

Where indeed? Somewhere among the throng of youngsters on the river; but Dan had no time to stop and hunt for him, and Phil did not know him. Dan looked disturbed.

"I ought to have stopped an' looked him up

sooner," he said. "Ask some of those little chaps to find him, Phil, and you tell him I'll bring Fred's skates down after supper"; and with that Dan hurried back to the office.

After all, he thought regretfully, he might have stopped and found Fred's brother, for he had to wait fifteen minutes still for the return telegram; but it could not be helped now. With the yellow envelope in his pocket he ran over to the shed for his team. As he came in sight of the shed he stopped and stared in bewilderment. There was no team there. He could not believe his eyes. He knew that he had fastened the horse securely in the end stall, but that was as empty as the others. He searched all around, then hurried across to the store.

"Have you seen anything of our team — the Junior Republic, you know?" he questioned anxiously.

"Your team? No," returned the store-keeper. "Lost it?"

"Why, how *could* I lose it? I tied the mare in the meeting-house shed about an hour ago, an' when I went for it just now the team was gone. S'pose anybody took it for fun — or anything?" It was no fun for Dan, as his anxious face and voice plainly showed.

"Don't know of anybody that 'd do that," the man replied. "Sure ye fastened the mare all right? If you did n't, she's prob'ly home by this time."

Dan caught at this straw of hope, and his face cleared a little.

"Mebbe that 's it," he said. "But I was sure I tied

her all right," and staying for no further word, he hurried off.

"Sech boys are dretful keerless!" the store-keeper remarked to his clerk as the two looked after Dan. "But I ruther like the looks o' that chap."

"That chap" was walking swiftly on over the snowy road, trying hard not to worry over the missing team. He did not mind the two-mile walk except that Brother would have so much longer to wait for the answer to his telegram. Dan pushed on faster at the thought.

"Took you longer than I expected, Dan," Brother said, as he tore open the envelope that the boy handed him. "Well, that's all right," he added in a tone of relief as he read the message.

"Did the mare come home?" Dan inquired anxiously.

Brother stared at him in surprise. "Come home?" he repeated. "What do you mean? Did n't you drive her home?"

"No, sir." The trouble gathered heavily again in the boy's gray eyes as he briefly told his story.

Brother listened in silence: "You fastened the mare carelessly, I suppose," he said, when Dan paused and looked at him anxiously. "Go over to the barn and see if she is there."

But she was not there, and in a few minutes Dan was back in the office, his eyes more troubled than ever.

Brother looked at him and considered for a moment. Like the store-keeper he had found boys apt

to be careless, and he believed that this one had been careless about tying Nellie under the shed. This was not a cause for the laws of the republic, yet Dan must pay for his carelessness.

"Well, my boy" — Brother's tone was kind but decided — "Nellie has probably gone to her old stable; you know I bought her of Mr. Pond, on the East Hill road. Go and get your supper and then you can walk down there and get the horse. She must be there, for of course nobody would have taken her from the shed."

"And if she ain't there?" the boy questioned gravely.

"Then you must hunt till you find her. Of course she's somewhere in the village."

Without another word, Dan turned away. At the door he paused for an instant and glanced back; then the door closed and he was gone.

Brother turned to his desk with a shadow of Dan's trouble in his eyes. That last intent look of the boy made him vaguely uncomfortable. He half wished that he had let him wait until morning before going to Mr. Pond's; but after all, a two-mile walk after a good supper was nothing to a strong, healthy boy like Dan, and he certainly had been a little careless lately. Brother got up and looked out of the window. "Bright moonlight, too. He'd skate for hours and never know that he was tired on such a night as this, and he'll ride home, of course"; and Brother settled down to work again.

But Dan had not waited for any supper. It was true that he had several times lately forgotten things that he had been told to do—there were so many interesting things at Hadley for a fellow to think about—his work, and the glorious winter sports, and the political excitements. Dan loved the life at Hadley, and he admitted to himself as he tramped back over the two miles of snow-covered road, that this second cold, lonely walk was no more than he would have deserved if he had been careless about tying that halter rope,—only he couldn't believe that he had.

“Never mind!” He threw back his shoulders and began to whistle. “If I did n't deserve it this time, I'll take it to pay for the other times when I did forget,” he told himself; and then he half wished that he had stopped for his supper before he took this second walk, for he knew that he would get none when he came back; that was against Hadley rules.

The moon, more than half full, poured a flood of chill, silvery light over the snowy road and the white fields on either side. Now and then a sleigh flew by and one ox team he met, the stolid oxen plodding along with slow, heavy steps, but no team seemed to be going villageward at that hour. When he passed a farmhouse, Dan's eyes lingered on the lighted windows, knowing that behind them there were warm firesides and bountiful supper tables. Phil would be home by this time; he would have taken the short cut over the hill. Dan pictured him now at the

table, with Grace and little Tim. They'd wonder perhaps where he was, and Jack Horner at least would miss him. It was queer how long the way seemed to-night. The republic boys thought nothing of those two miles, when half a dozen of them got permission to go down to the village stores to buy stuff for a "spread."

But at last he reached the village and hurried through it, stopping only to peer into the shadows of the church shed in the vain hope that somehow the team might have gotten back there. At Fred Baker's door he stopped to leave the borrowed skates which had been slung around his neck all this time; then he went on, nearly half a mile farther, to the Pond farm on the East Hill road. His rap brought the farmer himself to the kitchen door.

"Has Nellie come back here — the horse you sold Mr. Carter, you know?" Dan asked eagerly.

"The bay mare? Why, no." Then seeing the hopeful brightness die suddenly out of the young face looking up into his, the farmer added kindly, "Come in — come in, an' tell us what's the trouble. It's too cold to keep this door open."

Dan stepped in, and the story was quickly told, the farmer listening with keen interest.

"Sho now!" was his comment as Dan paused. "That certainly is a queer business. You're *sure*'t ye tied her so she couldn't anyway get herself loose?"

Dan was weary of answering that question, but he

said once more that he was sure. Mr. Pond nodded his head thoughtfully.

"An' ye don't think any o' your republic boys could a-come along an' drove off the team for a joke — eh?"

No, Dan did n't think that — he only wished that it had been so.

The farmer took a lantern from the chimney-piece, then set it down again.

"The mare could n't a-got into a stall with the wagon hitched to her," he said with a good-natured laugh at himself, "but come along an' we'll look around the yard an' the sheds. We won't need no lantern fer that, with that big moon a-shinin' on the snow."

But the search was fruitless and Dan's heart was heavier than ever when they returned to the house. At the door he stopped.

"I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Pond," he said. "Where do you think I'd better look for the team now?"

"You better go home!" the farmer returned decidedly. "I did some mediatin' while we was pokin' round them sheds, an' I'll tell ye what I begin to think's happened to that team. I was over to Morrison's store this afternoon 'bout four o'clock, an' two black-faced fellers come in askin' 'bout the way to Slaterville. French C'nadians they was — I knew 'em by the curi's twist to their talk, a's well's by their faces. I did n't like the looks of 'em 't the time — I

said so to Morrison when they left. Now mind ye, I ain't sayin' 't they took your team, but if anybody took it, it's more likely to my mind to be them than anybody else 't I c'n think of."

"Slaterville!" Dan's voice had a discouraged ring. "That's eight miles from here, ain't it, Mr. Pond?"

"Yes, eight miles, good."

"Well, I know the road. Good-night, an' thank yer 'gain," Dan said as he turned away.

"Wh — what? Hold on there, boy!"

Dan stopped and looked back.

"You ain't a-thinkin' of *footin'* it to Slaterville — an' a night like this?"

"Yes, sir. Bro — Mr. Carter told me I must find the team before I came back."

"But he never meant to tell ye to walk eight miles a freezin' night like this!" the farmer remonstrated.

"I don't think he would have sent me so far, but I don't know. You see he thought I'd been careless an' I guess he meant it for a punishment — so I must do what he said." The boy moved on, but again the farmer's voice arrested him.

"Come back here — you!" As Dan obeyed the authoritative summons the farmer opened the kitchen door and bawled:

"M'ria — Come here, M'ria!"

"Well, — what say, Ezry?" Mrs. Pond answered as she hastened to the door.

"Here's this young fool's made up his mind to

walk to Slaterville on a wild goose chase after that missing team!" growled the man. "You pick him up suthin' to eat, M'ria, an' don't waste no time about it!"

"Mercy me!" exclaimed Mrs. Pond, and with that brief expression of wonder she trotted off to the pantry. She came back in a few minutes with a generous luncheon wrapped in an old napkin.

"There, boy," she said, "I guess you won't starve, but I dunno but what you'll freeze before mornin'."

"Wait a minute!" This time it was the farmer who disappeared and came hurrying back with a big woollen comforter in his hand. "There! mebbe that'll keep ye from freezin', ye pig-headed little fool you!" he remarked as he threw the muffler across the boy's shoulders. "Now go on, since you're set on it, an' be sure you hunt up Jim Holbrook, the blacksmith. He's the only man I know in Slaterville. Tell him I sent ye, an' I'm sure he'll do what he can to help ye."

Dan's thanks, though brief, were warm and fervent, and as he trudged on through the moonlight, he vowed that he would never forget the kindness of these two. He munched bread and butter and cold meat with a warm glow at his heart. Nothing ever tasted better, he thought — for he had the good sauce of hunger — but he wisely reserved some cookies and gingerbread to eat later on.

That night walk of Dan's was a hard as well as a lonely one, for in many places the snow was rough

where heavy teams had passed; and the biting wintry wind seemed to blow right through the boy's clothing, which was not as warm and thick as it should have been. He wound the warm woollen comforter once more around his neck, and pulled one end of it over his cap to keep his ears from freezing. Then he buttoned the remainder of his provisions into his jacket, stuffed his hands as far into his pockets as he could, and plodded on. The houses on that road were few and far between, and after he had gone two or three miles those that he did pass were dark. It seemed unspeakably lonely and dreary to the boy who had always until now lived in crowded city streets. The miles seemed endless, and as the night wore on the cold became more bitter, and Dan grew so tired and sleepy that he could hardly drag himself along. Had it been a summer night, he would have crept into some sheltered place and slept a little, but in this dreary waste of chilly whiteness there was no place where he could find shelter; so on and on he went, until at last he saw before him the clustering roofs of a large village, and his tired eyes brightened and he quickened his steps, for he knew that this must be Slaterville. When, however, he walked through the silent streets between the rows of houses with their blank, dark windows, he felt almost more lonely than he had when he was on the road with snow-covered fields on either side; for here were many human beings, but it seemed as if they had all turned coldly away from the tired, half-frozen boy,

who had to summon all his manliness to keep the tears from his eyes as he wandered aimlessly down the wide silent street under the bare branches of the tall trees.

He dropped down at last on the steps of a little white church, wishing that there had been a clock in its steeple to tell him how many hours he must wait for morning. He was not enough of a country boy to tell the time by any of nature's clocks. But he did not sit there long, for in a few minutes his feet felt like ice, and icy shivers ran up and down his back; he knew that it would not do for him to stay there, and he pulled himself up and walked on. He gazed longingly at the barns in some of the yards that he passed, envying the cows and horses in their warm quarters. When the moon went down and dark shadows gathered about the village yards—when that deadliest cold of all crept over him in the still hour before the dawning—he grew desperate.

“I'll freeze to death if I don't get warm!” he muttered, and he crept silently across the next big yard he came to, and tried the barn door. It was locked, and so was the next one, but the third had a side door, held only by a slender stick, that bent as Dan tried to pry the door open with his half-frozen fingers—bent and broke, and with a half sob of mingled misery and relief the boy felt his way through the darkness within the barn till he stumbled against the steps leading to the loft, where he knew there would be hay; and it was n't long before he had

burrowed deep into the warm, fragrant mass over against the wall, where he hoped that he might not be discovered. For a long time he was too cold to sleep, and lay there listening to the occasional sounds from the stalls below; but after a while he got warm, and then he fell into a heavy sleep that lasted till broad daylight. He was awakened by loud voices in the barn below, and for a few minutes he lay half bewildered by his unfamiliar surroundings. Then he remembered, and held his breath to listen. There seemed to be two boys quarrelling over something — yes, it was about that side door through which he had entered the barn.

“I tell ye I did. I fastened it with a stick.”

“An’ I say ye did n’t, else ’t would be fastened now!” retorted another voice.

Then the first shouted angrily, “Here’s the very stick, Jo Holbrook — so now!”

Holbrook — Holbrook? Why, surely that was the name of the blacksmith that Mr. Pond had mentioned. It would be queer, Dan thought, if he had actually stumbled in — broken in — to that very man’s barn. He sat up and brushed the hay from his hair. The boys below were still wrangling about the unfastened door, when Dan went slowly down the stairs, and the two forgot their quarrel as they stared at him.

“What you doin’ in our barn?” demanded the older of the two, starting towards him with a threatening gesture.

"Waiting to find out if your father is a blacksmith," returned Dan, quietly.

"What business is it of yours what my father is? I can tell ye one thing — he don't allow tramps in his barn!"

"Well, I hope, if he *is* a blacksmith, that he's not like his son!" retorted Dan, shortly. He was so tired and so disheartened — it seemed just then more than he could stand to be bullied by this big quarrelsome fellow. He turned to the younger boy, who stood staring at him with eyes round with wonder.

"Is your father a blacksmith?" he asked.

The boy nodded, and Dan's face brightened a little.

"Then I want to see him," he said.

"I bet he won't want to see *you!*" the older boy called, as Dan left the barn; but Dan made no answer, only hurried across to the house.

The blacksmith himself opened the kitchen door in answer to the boy's knock, and listened silently to his story. Dan told it in a brief, straightforward fashion, and his tired face bore witness to the hard night he had had. When he told how he had taken refuge in the barn to keep from freezing, the blacksmith said quietly:

"Ye'd been a fool if ye had n't. For once I'm glad that them careless boys o' mine did n't fasten the door's they ought to."

The boys in question had followed Dan to the house, curious to know what he had to say to their

father. The older one looked a bit ashamed as he met Dan's eyes.

"And did you see anything of the team? Did it come to Slaterville?" Dan asked anxiously.

"Come an' went," the blacksmith answered. "I happen to know, 'cause they stopped to git me to sharpen the mare's shoes. She had a white star on her forehead, an' one white foot, hadn't she?"

"Yes." Dan's face was very sober.

"An' the fellers that drove her was French Canadians, with black eyes an' red cheeks; looked as if they might be brothers?"

"I guess so. Mr. Pond thought those two might have stolen the team. Then they went on?" Dan questioned hopelessly.

"Yes; took the Springfield^d road. They seemed to be in a tearing hurry. I understand why, now."

Dan's heart was heavy. Then his weary quest was not yet ended.

"How far is it to Springfield?" he inquired anxiously.

"Twenty odd mile—too far for you to walk it in this weather."

Dan had been sitting by the stove in a chair that the smith had drawn forward for him. Now he pulled himself up slowly.

"I guess I'll have to go all the same," he said.

"What? 'N' sleep out doors if somebody's careless boys don't happen to fasten the barn door with a straw?" The big blacksmith made a queer face,

trying to frown at his boys and wink at Dan at one and the same time.

"Yes," was all that Dan said in reply.

"How much money ye got?"

Dan pulled out a handful of republic coins. The blacksmith eyed them scornfully.

"That stuff's no good," he said. "Hain't ye any real money?"

Dan shook his head. "This is the only kind we use at the republic," he said, while the blacksmith's boys eyed the coins with much interest.

"Wal, I swan! You've got plenty o' pluck if ye ain't no money!" the man exclaimed. "Look here, now — s'pose I say I'll lend ye enough to take ye to Springfield an' back on the train?"

Dan looked up gratefully into the smith's face. "I'd say you are mighty good," he replied, "but I could n't take it 'cause I could not pay it back."

"But the owner of the team's the one to pay it back. It's his business you're on," the other persisted.

Dan shook his head. "That ain't the way we do business at Hadley," he answered, with a touch of quiet pride. "We don't run up debts for somebody else to pay."

The blacksmith gazed at the boy in silence for a moment, then he began again:

"Well, now, look a-here —" But his wife, who had been busy over the stove while the talk had been going on, now interrupted him briskly:

"Breakfast 's on the table an' it won't keep hot long in this weather. That boy's goin' to eat with us, so set right up—you can eat an' talk at the same time."

The blacksmith laughed. "Takes the old lady to settle things!" he said. "Draw up your chair, young man."

And Dan gladly drew up his chair and ate a breakfast that he often remembered in after days, while the blacksmith grumbled because he did n't eat more. When they rose from the table Mr. Holbrook said:

"Now, look here — I see you're in a hurry to be off, but I could n't sleep to-night if I had to think o' you footin' it to Springfield in weather like this. I'd a sight ruther give ye the money — not for your sake, ye understand, but to ease my mind. Ezry Pond would n't 'a' sent ye to me if ye had n't been all right. I like your pluck an' your stick-to-it. Now jest put your pride in your pocket an' take this money." He held out a bill.

Dan colored and looked gratefully into the man's kindly face, but he shook his head.

"I can't, Mr. Holbrook," he said, "but I'm ever so much obliged to you. I can't think what makes you so good to me. I guess I won't forget that breakfast in a hurry," he added, with a grateful glance towards the blacksmith's wife. He handed some of his republic money to the smaller boy. "Maybe you'll like 'em to play with," he said.

Seeing that Dan was determined in his refusal, the

blacksmith would not detain him, but often that day he thought of the sturdy independence of the boy, and hoped that his own sons might grow up with a like spirit.

Dan set off with his heart warmed by the kindness that had been shown him, and his strength renewed by the big breakfast he had eaten, but still, as the day wore on, he found himself again very weary. The villages were few. Scattered farmhouses he passed, but most of the way it was simply plodding heavily over the rough, hard-frozen snow between the endless, lonely white fields, with now and then a patch of woods. It was a little warmer than on the previous day, but the east wind was chill and penetrating, and gathering clouds threatened a coming storm.

"Rain or snow, I do' know which would be the worst," Dan said to himself as he tried to push on faster.

At noon, he ate what remained of the lunch that Mrs. Pond had given him. He wondered where his next meal would come from, and where he should find shelter that night. He wondered, too, what he should do when he did reach Springfield — but he did not worry about that. To cover those endless miles of snowy road was the one thing he had now to do.

As the day wore on the walking grew ever more difficult, for the road in some parts was almost unbroken. By the middle of the afternoon, Dan began to feel almost discouraged. Cold, hungry, lame and tired, and so many, many miles yet to travel! Then

came a bit of good fortune when the driver of a passing team called to him :

“ You seem to be going my way, — want a ride ? ”

“ You better b’lieve I do ! ” Dan answered promptly, and, waiting for no further invitation, he clambered into the wagon. It was a covered wagon, and the top made some shelter from the biting wind that swept over the snow, while the old patchwork quilt which the driver shared with him soon brought a comfortable warmth to his numb feet. He settled back with a long sigh of comfort, as the man, glad of any company on such a dreary day, opened upon him a battery of questions. Dan told his story frankly, and the man listened to it with interest. A stolen team is matter of interest to any farmer, but this one took a disheartening view of the situation.

“ You ’ll never ketch them fellers ! ” he declared. “ Ye might ’s well make up your mind to that. Even if you should find ’em with the team, what could ye do ? They would n’t give it up to a boy like you.”

But Dan had not lived among the young law-makers for nothing. He answered promptly, “ If I find ’em, I can get the team. I ’ll go straight to the police station an’ get the thieves arrested.”

“ Wal’ — and then what ? ”

“ Then the police commissioners would telegraph to the Hadley Republic, and Brother — I mean Mr. Carter — would know what to do next.”

“ You ain’t no fool ! ” the man asserted, with an

approving nod. "Ruther wish I was goin' on to Springfield to see the end on 't."

But his destination was a large village six miles from Springfield, and the short winter day was near its close when they reached this place.

"You better stay here an' get a sleep to-night," the friendly farmer advised the boy. "It'll take ye till mornin' to travel them six miles on these heavy roads, an' in the dark, too. Besides, the storm will be along before mornin', if I'm any weather prophet."

"All the more reason, then, to get on as far as I can before it comes," Dan persisted, as he prepared regretfully to leave his warm, comfortable seat, "an' besides, I have n't any money to pay for lodgin'."

"An' I'm in the same fix," the man returned, but he turned his eyes away as he spoke. "I shall sleep in my wagon to-night in the barn where I'm goin' to put up my horse. Look here, now," he added with a sudden thought, "the wagon's big enough to hold the two of us, an' you're welcome to half the beddin' if you'll stay." He glanced with a grin at the old patchwork quilt which had already done Dan such good service.

The boy hesitated, considering. The offer was tempting, for his brief rest of the night before, and the long hard miles of tramping, had left him dead tired. Now when this chance for a rest offered, the thought of the cold, lonely night walk seemed unendurable.

"All right," he said, "I'll do it, an' thank ye too."

So not to lose any time, he stepped over the seat and stretched his tired legs out in the wagon, while the man drove on to the big barn belonging to the village tavern. When he had driven in and unharnessed and fed his horse, he poked his head into the wagon and said in a low tone:

"Asleep?"

"Most," replied Dan drowsily.

"Wal', I'm goin' in now to get some supper. Wish I could pay score for two. Seems meaner'n pusley to leave you here with an empty stummick."

"Guess I sha n't starve," Dan answered, with a smothered sigh. "Hope you'll get a good supper."

"An' you a good sleep!" returned the man as he turned away.

Dan did not lie long awake after that. Much as he needed food, he needed sleep yet more, and it came to him quickly.

A somewhat rough shaking aroused him in the morning.

"Wal' you *be* a sleeper! Begun to think you'd starved to death in the night," the man was saying as Dan opened his eyes and sat up with a laugh.

"Not quite," the boy answered. "I did have a jolly good sleep, though. Is it storming?"

"Not yet — looks like it might set in any minute."

"Well, then, I must be off. Thank ye again," Dan said as he climbed out of the wagon.

"Thank ye for nuthin'!" returned the man somewhat gruffly, as he busied himself with his horse.

Dan wondered a little at his brusque tone. He could not guess that the farmer was ashamed of the stinginess that made him allow the boy to go off hungry — for, in spite of what he had said, his pockets were by no means empty.

So Dan began another long tramp, thinking, as he went, of that breakfast he had had the day before, and wishing most heartily that he could have its like this morning. The bitter air made him ravenously hungry, and to know that there were people who had eaten or were eating at that moment in every house he passed, made him feel as if he really must have something to stop that gnawing in his stomach. Why shouldn't he stop and ask for something to eat? He never had begged; he had always been a sturdy, independent little chap, and had earned his own bread and butter almost ever since he could remember, but there was no chance to earn a breakfast now. He walked more and more slowly, trying to make up his mind to knock at one of these kitchen doors and ask for something to eat. Yet he passed one after another till he came to the very last house in the village. There was a barn in the yard, and through its open door Dan could see a man milking a red cow.

"Now or never!" he muttered, and hurried over to the barn.

"I ain't had any supper nor any breakfast, an' I'm pretty hungry," he said. "Will you give me a little of that milk?"

The man glanced up at him and answered in a surly tone, "No, sir! I never give nothin' to tramps."

Without another word the boy turned and marched back to the road, and so passed out of the village.

It is pleasant to know that the surly milker had to pay for his curt refusal. His wife had seen the boy cross the yard, and when her husband carried his full pails into the warm kitchen she inquired curiously:

"Who was that boy, father?"

"I dunno," growled the man.

"Wal', what 'd he want?" His wife's voice was a trifle sharper.

"Wanted some o' this milk, an' I told him I never give nothin' to tramps. Now ye know!"

"Well, I call that downright inhuman — to refuse a drink of milk to a hungry boy, such a cold mornin' as this, too!"

"Humph!" grunted the man, "I guess he war n't starving."

"You don't know whether he was or not. I declare, if I could make him hear I'd call him back now and give him all he could drink."

Flinging her apron over her head, she ran to the door, but Dan was far down the road, and beyond recall. The woman's motherly heart was stirred with unwonted displeasure. "John's growin' so hard an' close!" she said to herself, as her husband went back to the barn; then a flash of humorous determination sparkled in her eyes. "I *was* a-goin' to make for dinner one o' them apple-tapioca puddin's he's so

fond of, but I declare I won't now. He need n't a-refused that poor boy a little warm milk," she said to the yellow cat on the window-sill.

Maybe Dan might have felt a slight satisfaction if he had known how he was avenged, but not knowing it he trudged on feeling dismal enough. But after all, he reminded himself, he had met three friends and only one bit of unkindness, so he ought not to complain. All the same, he could not summon courage to risk another such refusal, so he stopped at none of the farmhouses that he passed later on — but just stuffed his hands in his pockets and tried not to think about eating. Under the circumstances, however, he got on but slowly. Several times he was obliged to stop and rest a while until the cold drove him on again; for no one offered him a ride that day. To add to his misfortunes, he slipped on an icy bit of road and twisted his ankle, and after that he could barely crawl. So it was almost dark when at last he saw, from the top of a hill, the town of Springfield stretching over the lowlands. By this time the long-threatening storm had begun — the snow was falling noiselessly about him, and the low-lying clouds quickly shut down into a premature night. There was half a mile yet to go, and the boy dragged himself along at a snail's pace, for the sharp pain in his ankle made him sick and faint. When he reached the first straggling houses, it was snowing so fast that he could not see three yards before him. He looked for a store where he could inquire about the livery

stables, but there seemed to be no stores in this section — only small, shabby houses. The wet, sleety snow had already soaked through the boy's clothing and chilled him to the bone ; his feet were numb with cold, his whole body aching with utter weariness, and he was faint for want of food, while through his ankle, at every step he took, darted a swift, wrenching pain that it took all his courage to bear. Altogether he was in pretty bad shape just then, and when, in turning a corner, he stumbled against a smaller boy, who broke into loud, angry expostulations, Dan was too worn out to mind in the least the hard words flung at him. He simply stood and waited until the boy wound up, indignantly :

“Next time you want suthin’ to tumble up against, you better pick out a lamp post !”

There were some snow-covered steps just behind him, and suddenly Dan dropped down on them. In a moment he looked up at the boy, who stood staring at him half curiously, half suspiciously.

“I’m done up !” he said slowly. “Ye see, I’ve walked ’bout thirty miles, an’ I’ve hurt my leg.”

“That so for a fact ?” Dan recognized the dawning friendliness in the other boy’s voice, and he told enough of his errand to awaken the interest of the stranger. Dan could always get on with street boys like this one. When he asked how many livery stables there were in the town, the answer was prompt :

“Five.”

"An' of course you know where they are. Can you show me the way?"

"Yep — come on !" The boy started off briskly, but promptly slackened his pace, as he saw how slowly and painfully Dan followed.

"It'd take all night for you to git 'round to 'em all," he observed. "Say — you better tell me just how that horse looks an' I'll kite 'round alone. I knows stable boys in all the liveries. I c'n git to see the horses — the new ones — an' then come an' tell you."

Aware that his strength was well-nigh exhausted, Dan was glad enough to agree to this. He carefully described the horse and wagon, and the boy was planning a meeting place when, without a sound, Dan suddenly dropped in a heap on the snowy sidewalk. The boy looked down at him and whistled ruefully. Then he stooped and shook Dan, but seeing that he was unconscious and, for all that he knew, dead — he set off on the run for a policeman, and was fortunate enough to find one on the next square.

"Hospittle case !" was the brief comment of the officer when he too had spoken to Dan, and tried in vain to shake him into consciousness — and he telephoned for an ambulance. The street boy waited until he had seen his new acquaintance put into the black wagon; then he set off on his quest. In the last of the five stables he found a horse that he thought might be the stolen Nellie. He wished that Dan had been there to settle the question, but as Dan

was n't, he concluded that perhaps he'd better not hang around the streets any longer — there was nothing going on, though it had stopped snowing now. He loitered along in front of the new hotel, admiring its brilliant electric lights. A gentleman stood in the vestibule, looking thoughtfully out into the snowy streets. The boy stared at him, wondering if he should ever be dressed like that and stay at a fine hotel. It did n't look as if those two had anything in common, but if they had happened to compare notes just then, the ragged little newsboy would not have gone home with empty pockets that evening. Still, his good fortune was only delayed a few hours — it overtook him the next day.

Dan opened his eyes to find himself in bed, with a doctor standing beside him; and as he looked about in bewilderment, the doctor motioned to a nurse, who brought a bowl of hot broth and began to feed the boy with it. Every mouthful seemed to give him new life, and when the bowl was empty, Dan settled back on his pillows with a long, restful breath, and was asleep before he had time to ask where he was.

"He'll pull through all right now, but he just missed a serious illness." These were the first words he heard when, after that long, deep, delicious sleep, he opened his eyes once more, and saw the doctor speaking to another gentleman, and that other was — yes, it surely was, Phil's father!

"It's all right, my boy," Mr. Boyd said quickly, as he saw the wondering look creep into Dan's eyes.

"We've found the team — thanks to that little chap that you tumbled into last night, and now you've nothing to do but rest and sleep and eat — and get well as fast as you can."

How in the world did Mr. Boyd know about the lost team, and how came he to be there anyway, Dan wondered, and he said, with a queer, surprise at his weak husky voice:

"Tell me."

Mr. Boyd glanced at the doctor, and as the doctor nodded, he said with a smile:

"You want to know how I came to be mixed up in it? Well, it's all through the telegraph. Phil telegraphed to me, and I telegraphed here to Springfield, and then I came on myself; but the street boy that you ran across last night found out where the horse was and came here to tell you early this morning. The men that stole the team got away, but we'll drive Nellie back to Hadley — you and I — as soon as you are equal to such a ride."

"But how'd you find me here? Where am I anyhow — is it a hospital?" Dan questioned.

"Yes, a hospital. When I learned from Phil that you had set out to walk all the way here, I was pretty sure that you would bring up in a hospital, so I came here to make inquiries this morning, and was not a bit surprised, but very glad to find you here."

It was all plain now, and Dan lay still thinking it over. So, after all, the team would probably have been recovered even if he had not tried so hard to

find it. He could n't help feeling a little disappointed. It rather seemed as if it had been all for nothing — that weary tramp, with its cold and hunger and suffering.

“But I could n't do any different,” Dan said to himself, and, being Dan, of course he could n't.

CHAPTER XVI.

PHIL IN A NEW LIGHT.

WHEN Phil left the skaters on the river that winter night, he walked briskly back over the hill, and reached the hotel just in time for supper. His exercise in the air had made him quite ready for it, and the meal was nearly over before he looked across and noticed Dan's vacant chair at another table.

"Hello!" he said to Grace in a tone of surprise, "Where's Dan?"

"I was wondering," she answered. "Jacky looks lonesome without him, does n't he?"

"I thought he'd be home long before this," Phil replied, and when he left the dining-room he went straight over to the office.

"Is n't Dan back?" he asked Brother.

"No, he has n't had time yet to walk down to the village," Brother answered.

Phil looked at him with a perplexed lifting of his brows.

"Walk — down?" he repeated questioningly.

"Yes. Did n't you know that he came home this afternoon without the team?" and as Phil shook his head, Brother told what had happened, ending with:

"Dan must have tied the mare carelessly, and she probably got loose and went to her old home, at Pond's, you know. So I told Dan to get his supper and go there for her."

Phil listened gravely. "He did n't come to supper," he said.

Brother shook his head impatiently.

"Why *will* you boys be so headstrong!" he exclaimed. "Well, he'll doubtless be along in a little while now. Since Nellie did n't come back here she's pretty sure to have gone to Pond's."

Phil went back to his sister, but when, an hour later, Dan had not returned, Phil went again to the office.

"Has n't Dan come back yet?" Brother inquired before Phil could speak, and the boy detected in his voice a reflection of his own anxiety.

"No," he answered; "I came to ask if I may walk down to Mr. Pond's. It won't take me long to go over the hill, and it's bright moonlight."

"Go to the barn and tell Jackson to put Dick into the sleigh. I'll drive down myself and you can go with me."

"Good!" and Phil was gone in a flash.

In a very few minutes he had the sleigh at the door, and Brother, who was waiting impatiently for him, sprang in at once.

"Jackson says that Dick is lame, so you can't drive very fast," Phil said, and so indeed it proved. Phil told himself impatiently that he could have

reached the village in half the time by the shorter way — on foot. Brother said little, but inwardly he was quite as impatient as the boy. It was nine o'clock when at last they reached the Pond farm, only to learn that Dan had gone on to Slaterville.

"But he ought to have known that I never meant for him to go beyond the village," Brother said, when he had listened to all that Mr. Pond could tell him.

"That's what I said to him, but he said that you told him he must find the team. Guess he was ruther cut up 'cause you thought he'd been careless 'bout fastenin' the mare. Kinder looks now 's if he was n't to blame, don't it?"

"Yes, it looks that way," Brother returned. "And to think of that boy walking all night in such bitter cold as this!"

"You might overtake him if that horse of yours is as good a traveller as Nellie," the farmer suggested.

Brother shook his head. "Dick's not much of a traveller any time, and to-night he's so lame that we had to walk him most of the way — and Dan has a long start. Well, the telegraph office is closed, of course — seems to be nothing we can do till morning." He gathered up the reins as he spoke.

"That's a likely boy — that Dan," Mr. Pond remarked. "I hope he gets through this business all right."

"I hope so too," Brother returned heartily, as old Dick limped off. "There's nothing for it but to go

home," he added to Phil, and his voice was grave. "Tuck that robe well around you — this wind is bitter." And then both of them thought of Dan, with no buffalo robe to shield him from that same bitter wind.

Phil spoke impulsively. "Brother — did n't my father leave some money with you — for me — if I should be sick or anything?"

In the moonlight, Brother glanced quickly at the boy.

"Why do you ask that, Phil?" he questioned.

"Because I know father's way — it would be queer if he did n't do something like that — and if he did, won't you let me use some of the money in the morning, for Dan? I want to send father a telegram — a long one — to tell him all about this; and then I know he'll find Dan, and the team too, probably."

"It is a kind thought, Phil — I'm glad that you feel so about Dan; but I am going to telegraph to Slaterville as soon as the office is open in the morning — to the blacksmith that Mr. Pond mentioned. There is no doubt in my mind that Dan will go to him, since Pond told him to, and he knows nobody else in the place — and he has no money," he added, the anxiety creeping into his voice again.

"But, Brother — I *wish* you'd let me. Dan's been" — Phil's voice shook, but he steadied it and hurried on — "He's been better to me than anybody knows, and father'd be so glad to help, and so would I —"

Brother understood then, and he could not deprive Phil of this opportunity which meant so much to him.

"You shall have your way in this, Phil," he answered quietly, but he had never before spoken in just that tone to this boy, and Phil felt the difference with a quick thrill of pleasure.

When at last old Dick had brought them back, Brother stepped out of the sleigh and stopped to hand Phil a five dollar bill.

"If you want more you can have it," he said.

Phil was so fearful of oversleeping in the morning that he was awake long before daylight, and dared not allow himself to doze again, for he meant to be at that telegraph office as soon as it was open. As a matter of fact, he was waiting on the steps, his nose red and his feet tingling, when the operator appeared and inquired jocosely if he had been standing there all night. But he stared and whistled when he saw the length of the message that Phil had written out.

"How much money you got?" he inquired.

"Enough to pay for all that," the boy returned, "only *do* hurry it off!" He pulled the bill from his pocket as he spoke, and after a quick glance at it, the man began to click off the message.

"When can I get an answer?" Phil inquired eagerly.

"Ought to get it in two hours."

"All right — I'll be back for it"; and Phil vanished, unheeding the curious questions that the man was asking about the stolen team.

By breakfast time, the news of the lost team and the absent boy had flown all over the republic, and Phil was peppered with questions all through the meal. When Allen slyly suggested that it might be the old story, — a runaway, — Phil's wrath blazed out fiercely.

"Well, you must be a fool if you don't know Dennis any better than that!" he cried, and Phil was by no means the only one who made an indignant response to the insinuation, so Allen tried to pass off his remark as a joke. It was quite evident that quiet, steady Dan had very many good friends in the republic.

The two hours were barely over when Phil appeared again at the telegraph office, to find the message waiting for him:

"All right — will attend to matter. Will wire to-night."

A great load seemed lifted from Phil's heart as he read that message. He had sent his father the address of the blacksmith at Slaterville, and he felt sure that by this time a message had flashed across the wires to that place. He had left the office, but suddenly he stopped and then hurried back. He had not used quite all his money, — he would send one more message, — and that one to Jim Holbrook. He could not wait till night to know where Dan was.

So for the first time in his life, the honest blacksmith received and sent two telegrams; but the answer he wired to Phil sent the boy home more anxious

than ever, for it told him that Dan's weary tramp had not ended, as he had hoped, at Slaterville, and the message from his father at night gave him no comfort.

To Phil and to Grace that next day seemed endless, and Brother was as anxious as they. Nor were they the only ones. All day long, wherever Phil went, the girls and boys besieged him with eager questions. Dan would have been amazed had he known of all the friendly interest shown in his welfare by these fellow-citizens of his.

In regard to Phil, the effect of it all was curious. His mind was completely absorbed with anxiety about Dan, and he gave not a thought to these other boys; and yet it was now that the popularity which he had once so much desired came to him quite unsought and all unnoted. The citizens discovered now, that this boy, who since his return had held himself so coldly aloof from them, was not cold and heartless after all. He was loyal and true to his friend, and that friend was the boy whom they all loved. Phil's popularity grew with amazing rapidity in these days when Philip Boyd was the last person of whom he was thinking.

When, on the third day, the news came that Dan and the team had been found, there was an enthusiastic outburst of relief and satisfaction. The citizens crowded about Phil asking for particulars, but it was a day later yet before a letter came from Mr. Boyd giving the whole story, with the welcome tidings that

Dan was getting better fast, and would be back at Hadley in a few days.

And when he did come, the reception that they gave him made Dan happier than he had ever been in his life before. Phil knew about when to expect them, and how could he keep his knowledge to himself with so many of Dan's good friends asking about it? Of course he had to let them know, and so, long before the carriage came in sight, there were half a hundred girls and boys out on the hilltop watching for it; and when they caught sight of it far down the road, rules about going out of bounds were forgotten, and there was a chorus of ringing shouts followed by a general stampede, and Brother, standing on the office steps, would have liked right well to race down the road with "the other boys."

Dan, bundled up in warm carriage blankets, heard the shouts, and saw the throng come rushing down the road, and wondered what it was all about. He never imagined that it was on his account until the girls and boys swarmed about the carriage and sung out all sorts of glad greetings, that he began to understand, and then he was so utterly surprised and overwhelmed that he had hardly a word to say.

Phil had clambered into the wagon and was shaking hands over and over with his father and Dan, while Mr. Boyd looked at his son with a heart too glad for words. No need to ask how it was with the boy — his handsome face, all alight with unselfish affection, told more than any words.

And now the citizens fell into line on each side the carriage, and into song as well, and so, to the music of "Our Republic" Dan came back to the only home he knew, where Brother and Grace with Jack and little Tim were waiting to give him a welcome that, if quieter, was no less warm; and in neither the small nor the big republic was there a happier boy that night than Dan Dennis.

Mr. Boyd lingered for several days at Hadley. He had been so lonely since Grace had been here — it was hard to go away and leave her, and no less hard to leave his boy — such a different boy from the idle, careless, indifferent fellow that he had brought here on that summer day. In a place that had done so much for Phil, Phil's father could not but be deeply interested, and seeing this, Phil himself felt a new pride in the republic, and was eager to have his father see and know all about it. So it followed that one day Mr. Boyd and Brother spent a long time walking about the grounds and looking off towards the hills and the valley; and then it leaked out that there was to be a new cottage, — prettier and larger than any on the place, — and that it was to be called Boyd Cottage, in memory of its donor, — and when at last Mr. Boyd had to leave, he had almost as enthusiastic a send-off as he had had a welcome when he came back bringing Dan.

CHAPTER XVII.

A NEW RECORD.

It was the fourth of March, and that date meant as much to the Hadley citizens every year as it means every fourth year at the capital of the bigger republic of which Hadley is a part. It was inauguration day, and President Allen was to take the oath of office and give his inaugural address. Then in the evening would come the inaugural ball — a feature of no small importance, since it was the one occasion in all the year when dancing was permitted at Hadley. So everybody was early astir, and rejoicing that for once the clerk of the weather had permitted the sun to shine on this great day.

Yet there were some who, in spite of the festival spirit, could not help looking forward anxiously to the days to follow; for they did not believe that the new president would do even as well as his predecessor had done. Tyler had been inefficient, but they feared that Allen would run the ship of state upon snags that Tyler had passed safely.

The leaders of the Good Government party had held frequent and anxious conferences in the past months, and their fears grew as they noted the tone of authority that the friends of the new president assumed even before this bright March morning.

Somebody had sent to the republic a hundred campaign flags, and with these the committee in charge had decorated all the buildings. A stage had been put up in front of the court-house, and here the new president was to stand to deliver his inaugural address. Of course, there was to be a procession. Is not the procession an inevitable part of inauguration? This one was to consist of the masculine members of the Labor party, all decorated with streamers of red, white, and blue cotton, and many of them bearing the small flags. For a band — there were the bugler and the drummer, who were in such frequent requisition.

Allen had a good delivery and no trace of diffidence, and his address was loudly applauded, but when they came to think it over, the leaders of the opposition party found little in it that was reassuring.

"It was bright and catchy, but 't was only words, words, words, after all," Kitty Hyde declared that afternoon in the library. She was speaking to a group of her friends, and among them were Grace and her brother and Dan, and Hodge, the late attorney-general.

It was Hodge who answered:

"It will be more than words after this. Allen and his crowd have had their heads together ever since last November, and with Choate to do their scheming for them, they're bound to make changes that we won't like. We must be out in force at the town-

meeting Saturday night, and we'll want all our wits about us too."

"This is the time when we want that three-day law," Gardiner added, with a half-teasing, half-reproachful glance at the girls.

Kitty flushed, and flung out her hand impatiently.

"Don't mention that three-day law, Will!" she cried. "I've never forgiven myself for our bargaining votes that time. We got our pay for it as we deserved to — or at least, I thought we did — but it seems to me we never shall hear the last of it."

"Oh, well," put in Will soothingly, "you girls have n't made all the mistakes — not by a great deal; but I do wish we had that law now, and then they'd have to post up the bills they propose to pass, and we'd have a chance to think 'em over an' talk 'em over, and make up our minds whether we like 'em or not."

"As it is," added Hodge, "they'll try to rush through a lot of new bills and we shall have to vote on them then and there, and have plenty of chance to repent at leisure afterwards, maybe."

"As we girls do," added Kitty, with a doleful little laugh. "Well," she went on, "we've gained a few recruits from the Labor party since the election anyhow, and we girls *can vote*, so the prospect is not so bad as it might be."

"That's so — with your votes to help us out, we ought to be able to prevent much bad legislation," assented Hodge, and then the talk drifted to the festivities of the evening.

The inaugural ball was to be in the great new barn, and the committee of arrangements had made the place pretty enough for any gathering. The horses and cows were kept in the basement, and at this season the big main floor was almost empty. What little hay remained was flung up to the loft, and then the girls swept and dusted the floor, and the boys put great branches of pine and spruce and hemlock wherever a place could be found for them along the walls, and draped campaign flags and festoons of creeping jenny to give a festive air to the place. For lights, the boys from the carpenter shops had put up rough brackets along the walls to hold kerosene lamps, and all the lanterns available were hung from nails to the beams. At one end of the barn a platform had been arranged and covered with old carpeting, and here were the seats for the little mother and as many of the helpers as cared to be there. As to Brother — he was director-in-chief of the festivities, and almost every girl in the republic claimed the right to one dance with him. The orchestra consisted of two violins from the village.

It was a merry gathering, and for this once, G. G.'s and Laborers forgot their differences, and thought only of the pleasure of the hour. Brother was everywhere, his watchful eyes taking note of all that went on; and at ten o'clock promptly, he gave the signal, and the last dance was over. Then after the lamps had been carefully extinguished, the boys took the lanterns and the flags — the drummer and the bugler

popped up -- and the long line set off, Brother and his wife leading, the president and vice-president next, then the helpers and the girls, and after them the boys -- and everybody singing "The Star Spangled Banner."

By the time that Brother and the girls and the new officials had all been duly escorted to their lodgings and loudly cheered and serenaded, the night was far advanced, but then, even at Hadley, inauguration comes but once a year.

At the town-meeting on the following Saturday, the cabinet officers were duly appointed -- all, of course, from the Labor party -- and a number of minor bills were passed; but contrary to the expectations of the leading G. G.'s, no really important measures were passed. The opposition leaders did not know what to make of this. It appeared as if Allen and his party intended to let things go on much as they had done in the previous administration. When the April town-meeting also passed very quietly, with no business of special interest, the G. G.'s began to relax their suspicious watchfulness and to hope for a quiet year with few changes.

So the days slipped away till it was time for the May meeting, and nobody -- none of the G. G.'s, that is -- anticipated anything out of the common, and, as it was a beautiful evening, many staid away from the meeting and went rowing on the pond.

Phil Boyd had driven that afternoon to a neighboring village on some business connected with the

printing office. Brother had told him to put two seats in the carriage and take his sister and two others with him if he liked, and Phil had invited Kitty Hyde and Dan. They were late in starting and the business detained Phil longer than he had expected, so they did not get back until nine o'clock, when the town-meeting was nearly over.

On the previous month the committee had been appointed to revise the constitution. The impression had been given, without its being said in so many words, that this committee would not be ready to report until the June meeting; but now, when some other business had been disposed of, the vice-president called for this report. Choate was chairman of the committee and he immediately rose and took a paper from his pocket. Even those who most distrusted and disliked Choate could not but enjoy his bright speeches. On this occasion he excelled himself as he spoke of the constitution, pointing out its weak points and its strong ones, and the necessity for certain changes. By the time he was ready to read the amendments proposed, he had everybody in a glow of good humor, and criticism was quite disarmed. This could hardly have been so, if some of those quick-witted leaders of the other party had not just then been lingering in the sunset light on the lake — but so it was.

"Section 5 under Article 1, and Section 3 under Article 2, have been amended as follows," Choate said at last, and he rapidly read the changed form,

calling particular attention to the difference in the wording. "One other section has been added under Article 2," he went on, "and these are all the changes except where in one or two instances a word has been omitted, or added. You can see for yourselves, as copies of the revised form will be circulated."

He handed some of the copies to a boy, who at once began to pass them along the rows of seats, and the speaker continued, with a glance at the clock, "If anyone has anything to say against these changes, we'd like to have him be quick about it, as it is getting late and there's other business yet to be considered."

A big, slow-witted boy rose and found fault with the wording of one sentence. It was a matter of small importance, but Choate seemed strangely slow in getting his idea, and kept him explaining and objecting — answering him in a way that set everybody laughing except the boy in question, who clung stubbornly to his point and grew every moment redder in the face and more angry — and the minutes were slipping away. Several were awaiting an opportunity to speak, but the chairman appeared to be afflicted with the peculiar political blindness — he could see only certain boys and no others could gain recognition. Moreover, it seemed that those who were recognized were the dullest and most tedious speakers, who yet persistently objected and argued until everybody's patience was exhausted, and

those who had wanted to speak had quite lost their desire and wished only to have the tiresome discussion of unimportant details ended. So there was a movement of relief all over the room when the chairman asked if they were ready for the question, and the clamorous response, "Question! Question!" quite drowned the few dissenting voices.

The question was put, the revised constitution adopted by a good majority, and then one or two bills were rushed through, many of the citizens departing without waiting even to hear them read.

The next afternoon, there was a meeting in Kitty Hyde's room, and grave and anxious were the faces of some of the girls who gathered there. Kitty had sent out an urgent summons for them, and some came not knowing why they were wanted, but others had already discovered what had happened.

Kitty's eyes were flashing indignantly, and her voice was sharp with intense feeling as she cried out:

"Girls, girls! What *were* you all thinking of last night to let this go through. Was n't there *anybody* wide awake enough to see what it means for us?"

"Why — what? What's the matter?" questioned Sue Fraley, who had just come in.

Kitty held up a paper. "It's this — this revised constitution. How *could* you girls vote for it? Did n't you read it?"

"Why, I glanced over it," replied Emma White, a

grave, steady girl of sixteen. "I did n't see anything wrong. What is it?"

"I could n't get hold of a copy," explained Lizzie Burt. "They only passed one or two copies to us girls."

"I thought I noticed all the changes, but that was such a little one — just a single word added — and I never discovered it till this morning," put in another, dolefully.

"If only I had n't staid out on the lake!" moaned Dora Street. "I knew all the time that I ought to be at that meeting, only it was so lovely on the water!"

"Well," cried Emma White impatiently, "Will you tell us, Kitty, what dreadful thing happened at that meeting — and I never knew!"

Kitty faced her. "We've *lost the right to vote!*" she exclaimed tragically. "That's what happened!"

Sue Fraley started forward, her face full of bewilderment.

"*Lost* it?" she repeated blankly, "Well, I'd like to know how. There was n't a single word said about girls' voting, last night."

"No," returned another, gloomily, "those boys were mighty careful not to say a word about it; but just look over that copy that Kitty has, Sue."

Sue made a grab for the paper and glanced hastily at the place indicated by Kitty. Her face flushed hotly as she read.

"Well! I call that downright mean!" she cried out. "Why, it's plain cheating!" Association with the "nicest girls" had done much for Sue.

"And to think they did it by just adding one word — only four letters!" exclaimed another, as several crowded around Sue to look at the paper.

"Only four letters, but they make all the difference. 'Every *male* citizen shall have the right of suffrage.'" Kitty quoted from the amendment.

"And we let that pass!" cried Sue, as she flung the paper angrily down on the table.

Dora Street picked it up. "It was Rufe Choate's little scheme — I'm sure it was!" she declared. "That word 'male' is written in tiny letters, and in such pale ink that anybody might easily overlook it. Nobody but Rufe Choate would have thought of fixing it so."

"And you know," added another girl eagerly, "you know, Emma, how Choate kept saying funny things and arguing every little point with those boys that objected to anything in the new constitution."

"Why, I never supposed that they *could* take away our right to vote, after they'd once given it to us," wailed Lizzie Burt from her seat in the corner. "Did you, Grace?"

Grace smiled at Lizzie; then she raised her voice a little and said quietly:

"Girls, haven't we groaned and grumbled long enough? What can we do now to mend matters?"

But that question not even Kitty or Dora could answer.

"We must talk it over with your brother and Will Gardiner and Hodge. There must be something we can do," Dora said, but Kitty shook her head dejectedly.

"I don't see what," she said, and then, with quite unwonted spirit for her, Lizzie Burt cried out:

"We've just *got* to find some way. Them Labor boys were just horrid at breakfast this morning, laughing and bragging about what they were going to do."

At this moment the tap, tap of a crutch sounded in the corridor, and Timmy Collins appeared, with a note for Kitty Hyde. Her face brightened a little as she glanced hastily over the few lines, and then read aloud:

"We want to see every G. G. girl in the school-room after supper to-night.
WILL GARDINER."

"It looks as if the boys had thought of something — I do hope so!" Kitty cried. "No need to urge you all to be there, but do be careful and not let the Laborers get wind of it."

When that evening the girls flocked into the school-room, they found the leading boys of their party awaiting them, and all with jubilant faces.

"Oh, boys, *have* you found any way to help us out of this trap that we've tumbled into?" Kitty demanded eagerly.

"We hope we have — we think we have, and may be we can do more than that," Will Gardiner answered. Then he raised his voice and called:

"Timmy, don't let anybody else come up here."

Timmy's thin little face, radiant now with a sense of proud importance, was poked in at the open door.

"No, I won't!" he crowed, and shut the door with an emphatic slam.

"Now then, girls, you must all promise not to let a hint get out if we tell you," Will warned, and then he paused and looked doubtfully at the eager, curious faces turned towards him. "Do you think so many girls can keep a secret?" he questioned mischievously.

"For shame, Will!" cried Kitty. "Girls — promise solemnly this minute not to mention outside this room what Will is going to tell us. Those who promise — stand!"

Instantly every girl was on her feet.

"That'll do," laughed Will. "Now listen. You remember how it was that the Laborers won the election last November?"

Kitty could not restrain a reproachful glance at some of the boys standing about Will. They were among the fifteen who had gone to the show that night, and so lost their chance to vote.

"Yes," she said significantly, "we remember."

"Need n't be down on these fellows any longer," Will laid his hand on the shoulder of one of them as he spoke, "for they're going to help us out of this

hole that we were stupid enough to tumble into last night. Tell the girls, Jo."

Jo Meade spoke up then.

"It was Allen that got us into that scrape. He kept gassing about that show, and wondering why we did n't go to it, and then he got Brown down in the village to offer us tickets. We've just found out that Allen himself paid for those tickets. We've got *proof* of it."

"Well?" Kitty questioned breathlessly, "but that's all over now. What has it got to do with this?"

"Why," shouted Will, exultantly, "we've got sure proof that Allen fixed it all up on purpose to have these fellows locked up, — so they could n't vote. And after he'd put 'em up to going, he gave Jones a hint to be on the watch and nab 'em when they came back late. We've got full proof of it all, and now," — he paused and added slowly and solemnly, — "now we can prove fraudulent election and *impeach our president*, — see?"

There was a moment of shocked silence as the girls looked into each other's faces.

"Oh, impeach the president!" one or two repeated, and Dora Street added, "Why, that seems dreadful!"

"Not so dreadful as to keep such a fellow in office." It was Phil Boyd who spoke now. "You see how unscrupulous he is. No knowing what he and Choate would do before the year's out."

"He thinks up his mean schemes and Choate works 'em out for him," added Gardiner.

"Then — will there have to be another election?" Kitty asked.

Will glanced at the other boys with a significant smile.

"Should n't wonder," he returned, and then there was an exchange of meaning glances among the boys. Evidently not all the secrets had as yet been entrusted to the discretion of the girls.

So it came about that Allen and the vice-president were solemnly impeached, and trial by the supreme court followed. The evidence against them both was absolutely convincing, and, after holding for three months the highest office in the republic, Allen and his mate were convicted and sentenced to three months in the reformatory.

Then another election was held and — how it was nobody could explain — but instead of Will Gardiner it was Phil Boyd who was nominated for chief executive, and Dan Dennis for vice-president. No sooner were their names announced than a wave of popular enthusiasm swept resistlessly over the small republic, and, before they fairly realized that they were even candidates, Phil and Dan found themselves elected by a good majority.

Nobody congratulated them more heartily than Will Gardiner.

"I never cared much about being president," he said to Phil. "There's too much hard work and worry and too little pay in the office for me, but" — with a laughing bow — "your Excellency can count

upon me whenever you need my assistance. I'm ready enough to work, only I don't want to be the figurehead and get all the blame when things don't go right."

"I'll remember that promise of yours, Will," Phil replied gravely. "And I hope you don't object to the office of Secretary of State, for that's what I want you to be."

So Phil remained another year in the republic, and, except the inevitable grumblers and the few evil-minded ones, nobody found fault with his administration, and many praised it. For himself, he rejoiced in this opportunity to do his best, and live down the bad record of those first wretched months of his stay at Hadley.

As for Dan — his new duties and honors developed him wonderfully, and he found out that he did like to study, after all — along certain lines.

When the hot weather came again, Mr. Boyd decided that Grace needed rest and change, and Phil, though he knew how much he should miss her, admitted that it was best for her to go. But there was loud remonstrance from the girls, who one and all pleaded with her to stay. Even big, clumsy Katie Sullivan coaxed her to remain a little longer.

"Mebbe I'll git some of me rough corners smoothed off a bit, if you'll stay with us," she pleaded, but she had to be content with the promise of a letter now and then; and hearing that promise there was a plea from all the other girls for letters,

and, between tears and laughter, Grace promised every one.

It was hard to say good-by to Brother, with his kind blue eyes and his strong, friendly hand-clasp, and to the gentle little mother who always made Grace long so for the mother she had lost long years before, but hardest of all to say good-by to Phil. Yet, when he stood with Dan on the platform, waving his hat to her as the train moved off, she looked back at him through her tears with a glad smile.

And the young president, as he turned away, laid his hand on Dan's shoulder and said earnestly:

"Old fellow, we 'll make her proud of us yet — you and I."

